NEIL YOUNG HIS DARKEST HOUR

PUNK
ANNIVERSARY
SPECIAL

SEX PISTOLS

...AND THE COUNTDOWN TO ANARCHY BY THOSE THAT LIVED THROUGH IT!

2016 PREVIEW
REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL...

ON THE ROAD WITH SQUEEZE

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN COSMIC VOYAGE

FAREWELL TO ALLEN TOUSSAINT

SUNN O))) BLOW YOUR MINDS

BOWIE: LAZARUS RISES!

THE GENIUS OF NEU!

COURTNEY BARNETT ARRIVES

THE RETURN OF THE CULT

135 REVIEWS
THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC...

★

NEW ALBUM
08.01.2016

davidbowie.com

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LONDON · MEMPHIS · CHURCH POINT

FEBRUARY 2016

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> "For an anxious person, this is just a crazy kind of world to live in."
>
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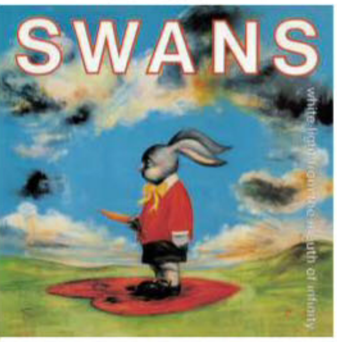
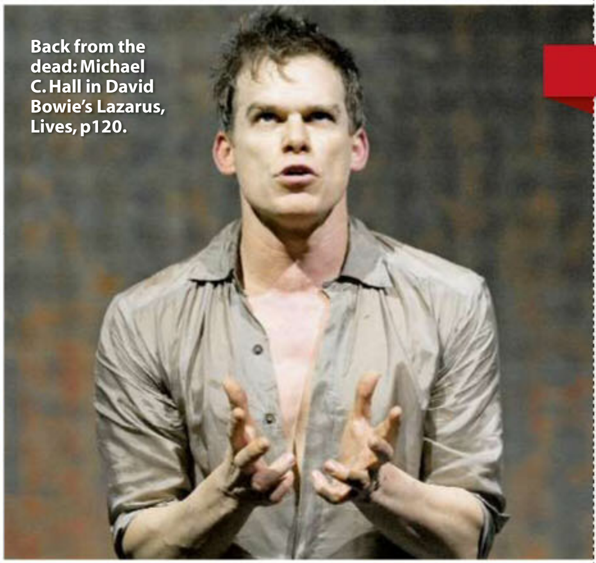
SAVAGES
ADORE LIFE



SWANS
white light from the mouth of infinity



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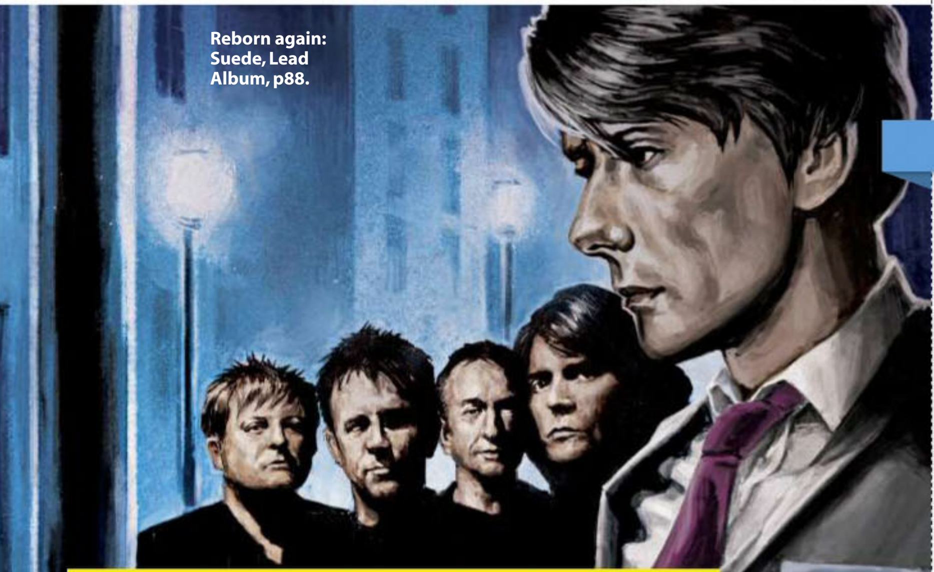


Reborn again: Suede, Lead Album, p88.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE

Søren Solkær

I am recharging in a hammock on a Thai island after a busy year with seven exhibitions across the world. Photographing Michael Rother in Copenhagen was very enjoyable. Straight off the train from Germany, he had a calm, meditative air about him. Seeing his great show later that night I understood what he'd been charging up for. www.sorensolkaer.com IG #sorensolkaer

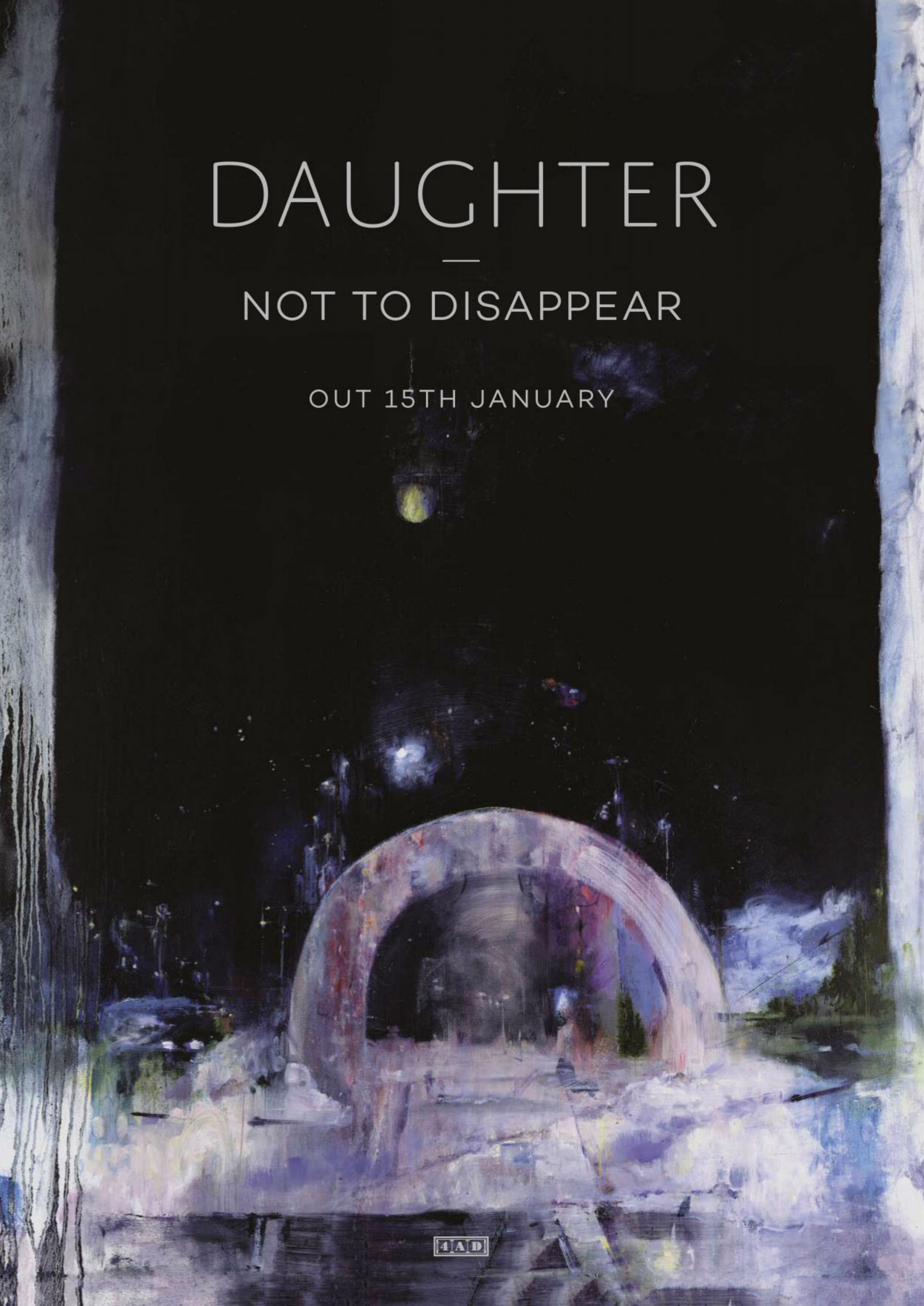
Daniel Strange

Think Strange is the banner under which the artist/illustrator Daniel Strange unleashes his creative output upon the world at large. Working mostly digitally, he aims to give a contemporary feel to his work while harking back to the classic era of illustration. See more at www.thinkstrange.co.uk

Pat Gilbert

When MOJO veteran Pat Gilbert was a 14-year-old punk rocker at school in Portsmouth (see left), little did he know that in 2015 he'd be taking tea and biscuits with Sex Pistol Glen Matlock and riffing about New Rose with The Damned's Dave Vanian as part of this month's '76 punk extravaganza. Neat neat neat…

Tony Nelson, Jan Versweyveld



DAUGHTER

NOT TO DISAPPEAR

OUT 15TH JANUARY

4AD

PRETTY VACANT

MOJO PRESENTS 15 PRE-PUNK NUGGETS

MC5
THE 101'ERS
THE STOOGES
PINK FAIRIES
HAWKWIND
NEW YORK DOLLS
SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND
FLAMIN' GROOVIES
THE HOLLYWOOD BRATS
ELECTRIC EELS
THE COUNT BISHOPS
MICK FARREN
DEATH
& MORE!

1 THE DICTATORS
MASTER RACE ROCK

"Hippies are squares with long hair/ And they don't wear no underwear/ Country rock is on the wane/I don't want music/I want pain!" is arguably one of the finest opening gambits in the entire history of rock. Formed in New York City in 1973, The Dictators epitomised the 'faster, louder', sloganeering approach of Stateside punk. The band's 1975 debut album, *Go Girl Crazy!*, is an acknowledged cornerstone of the genre, blending hard rock smarts with a streetwise attitude that resonated in the UK.

2 FLAMIN' GROOVIES
SLOW DEATH

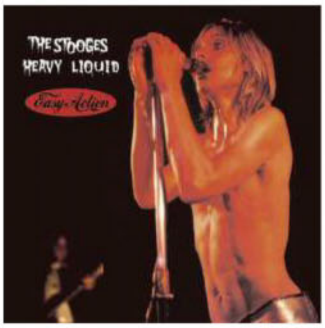
The lineage between mid-'60s punk and the outsider spirit that emerged a decade later is typified by the Flamin' Groovies who emerged from the San Francisco scene in '65. In the summer of '76, it was the Groovies who famously headlined The Roundhouse with the Ramones in support, inspiring a raft of UK musicians that watched them. This rare version of the classic track – a cautionary view of heroin abuse – underlines the band's early musical invective and dynamism.

3 MICK FARREN & THE NEW WAVE
LOST JOHNNY

If Dylan had fronted a punk band, it would have sounded like this. Indeed, art school agitator Mick Farren was an avowed Bob fan, having witnessed him play the Royal Albert Hall in '66. A rock'n'roll zealot, Farren led his band, The Deviants, with a strong sense of righteousness, railing about the fattening of the genre as the '70s progressed. This febrile tune – co-written with Lemmy – was cut in '76 and released on New York DIY label, Ork.

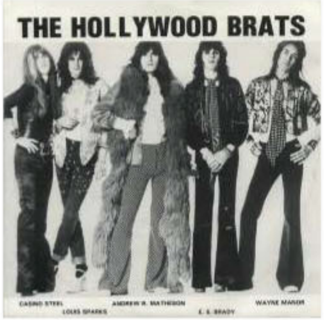
4 THE COUNT BISHOPS
I NEED YOU

One of the bands that typified mid-'70s British 'street rock', The Count Bishops built their set on tough-sounding R&B and '60s covers. This walloping version of The Kinks' lustful 1965 tune is a prime example from the band's debut released as punk hit the mainstream. The latter benefitted the London five-piece who appeared on Top Of The Pops in '78 thanks to their blistering cover of The Strangeloves' I Want Candy.



9 THE STOOGES
COCK IN MY POCKET

The split of The Stooges in the summer of '71 was followed by a chance meeting between Iggy Pop and David Bowie a few months later. The latter agreed to produce Pop and brought him to London to record what became the *Raw Power* album. A live show at London's Scala in the summer of '72 was attended by a number of future punks who formed their own bands, absorbing both the 'new' Stooges' music and their attitude – the power of both underlined by this frenetic, provocative tune.



10 THE HOLLYWOOD BRATS
SICK ON YOU

Gutter punks Hollywood Brats formed in London in '71, recording their debut LP two years later only to find that their label refused to release it. Consequently they split just as punk was starting to ferment. In fact, the Brats were ahead of their time. The album was eventually issued in Norway in '75 and in the UK in 1980. Frontman Andrew Matheson published his memoir last year which bears this track's name. It was voted MOJO's book of the year.

11 HAWKWIND
MOTORHEAD

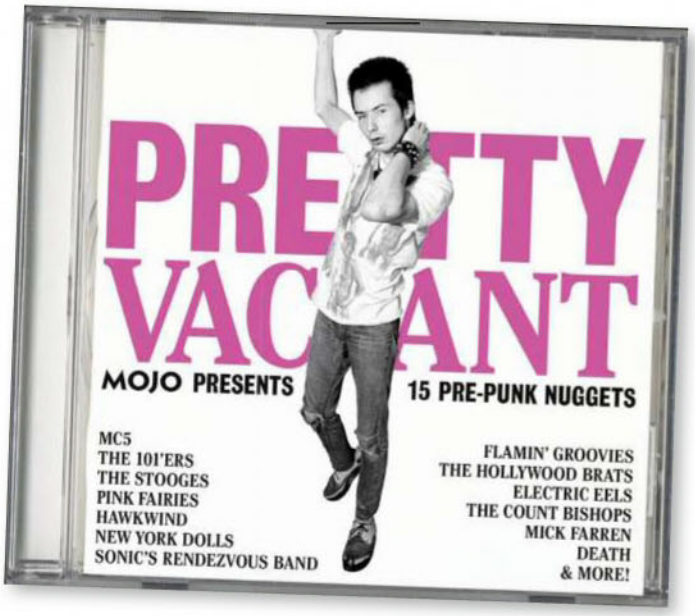
The last song penned by Lemmy prior to his ejection from Hawkwind in May 1975, this tune provided the bass player with the name of his next band. A tough-driving track, it draws the line between Hawkwind's free-thinking hippy principles and punk's libertarian spirit. Hawkwind would adapt their sound in the wake of the punk, while Motörhead would famously find favour with a punk audience, as Lemmy when on to record with The Damned and befriend Sic Vicious.

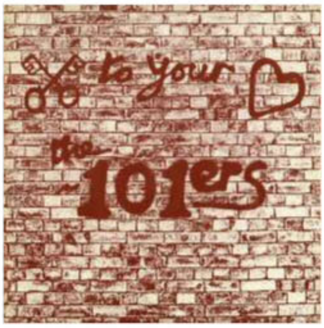
12 SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND
ELECTROPHONIC TONIC

In the wake of the MC5's demise guitarist Fred 'Sonic' Smith teamed up with Rationals frontman Scott Morgan, Stooges drummer Scott Asheton and Gary Rasmussen of The Up. While they played shows during their five years together, they only cut one single, City Slang. The 45 featured the same track in stereo and mono form, one version per side. Electrophonic Tonic was originally intended as the B-side, this slashing version dating back to '76.

Rex (2), Alamy (2), Redferns

ON OCTOBER 1976 THE DAMNED RELEASED NEW ROSE on Stiff Records. Produced by Nick Lowe, it was British punk's first salvo. It's opening line reprised The Shangri-Las 1964 hit, Leader Of The Pack, while the single's flipside was a cover of The Beatles' Help! – both indicators that, for all of the tabula rasa talk, punks were willing to acknowledge their antecedents. This bespoke MOJO collection gathers some of the undercurrents that further informed the punk explosion of '76. The majority of the tracks on offer were either written or recorded prior to that fateful year, confirming that rock'n'roll's insurrectionary spirit remained alive and well, despite the bloated sounds infecting the mid-'70s musical mainstream. Welcome, then to *Pretty Vacant* – a compilation featuring a selection of acts that set the tone for what followed…





5 THE 101'ERS
KEYS TO YOUR HEART

On April 3, 1976, the Sex Pistols supported London pub rockers the 101'ers at the Nashville Rooms. It proved to be a life-changing experience for Joe Strummer who, despite having recorded this debut single, signed up to punk's new invective, quitting the 101'ers to join the fledgling Clash. Indeed, the band had split by the time this 45 was released. Today, its scrappy post-'60s groove sounds spirited, Strummer's vocal reminiscent of his later output with The Clash themselves.

6 NEW YORK DOLLS
WHO ARE THE MYSTERY GIRLS?

The band that famously inspired Malcolm McLaren's construct of punk, the Dolls played their first show at a homeless centre on Christmas Eve '71. Rock'n'roll romantics to a man, their early set included songs by the likes Gary 'US' Bonds and Chuck Berry. If their pouting and preening was at odds with America's increasingly dressed-down approach to rock, then so too was their ragged sound typified by this live in-the-studio track from '73.

7 PINK FAIRIES
DO IT

When The Deviants sacked their singer Mick Farren following a disastrous US tour in 1970, the remaining members of the band formed the Pink Fairies. Playing rock'n'roll covers, their extended jams were also boiled down for maximum impact. Key participants in the bohemian Ladbroke Grove scene, the band's appetite for drugs, chaos and freaking out is evident on this rapacious version of Do It which precedes the version on the Fairies' 1971 debut, *Never Never Land*.

8 MC5
SISTER ANNE

The band that the Ladbroke Grove longhairs modelled themselves on, Detroit's MC5 transformed their brand of post-psychedelic hard rock into genuine protest music, their left-wing views amplified by their manager John Sinclair. This classic, thunderous tune was written by Fred 'Sonic' Smith and confirms their desire to resurrect rock'n'roll's primal spirit. Indeed, this particular take is rawer than the version on the band's 1971 LP, *High Times*, after which they were dropped and split up.

13 DEATH
POLITICIANS IN MY EYES

Originally formed in Detroit as a funk outfit, the three-piece of Death were subsequently influenced by The Who, Jimi Hendrix and Alice Cooper and mutated into a rock band with a distinct edge. The brief patronage of Columbia Records' Clive Davis came to an end when the band refused to change their name to something less nihilistic and more saleable. With only a limited amount of material recorded, they released 500 copies of this remarkable single in 1976 on their own label, Tryangle Records.

14 ELECTRIC EELS
AGITATED

Armed with a reputation for confrontation and sheer violence, Cleveland's electric eels boasted a sound to match. Frontman John D Morton's sneering lyricism and deliberately delinquent vocal delivery added to the chaos. Gigs proved thin on the ground as a result of the band's behaviour and their approximation of the Swastika for shock purposes. Their debut single, Agitated, was recorded in '75 but was finally released three years later, by which time the band were no more.

15 CRUSHED BUTLER
IT'S MY LIFE

Formed in London in '69, the magnificently named Crushed Butler consisted of guitar-wielding frontman Jesse Hector, bassist Alan Butler and drummer Darryl Read. Moving from covering tunes by the Small Faces et al, they created their own brand of blasting hard rock. Sadly, material like the gonzoid It's My Life, failed to curry favour among UK labels, forcing the band to split in '71, Hector moving on to lead the Hammersmith Gorillas.

MORE MOJO '76… AND BEYOND! A PUNK VIDEO PLAYLIST COMPILED EXCLUSIVELY FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE AT WWW.MOJO4MUSIC.COM

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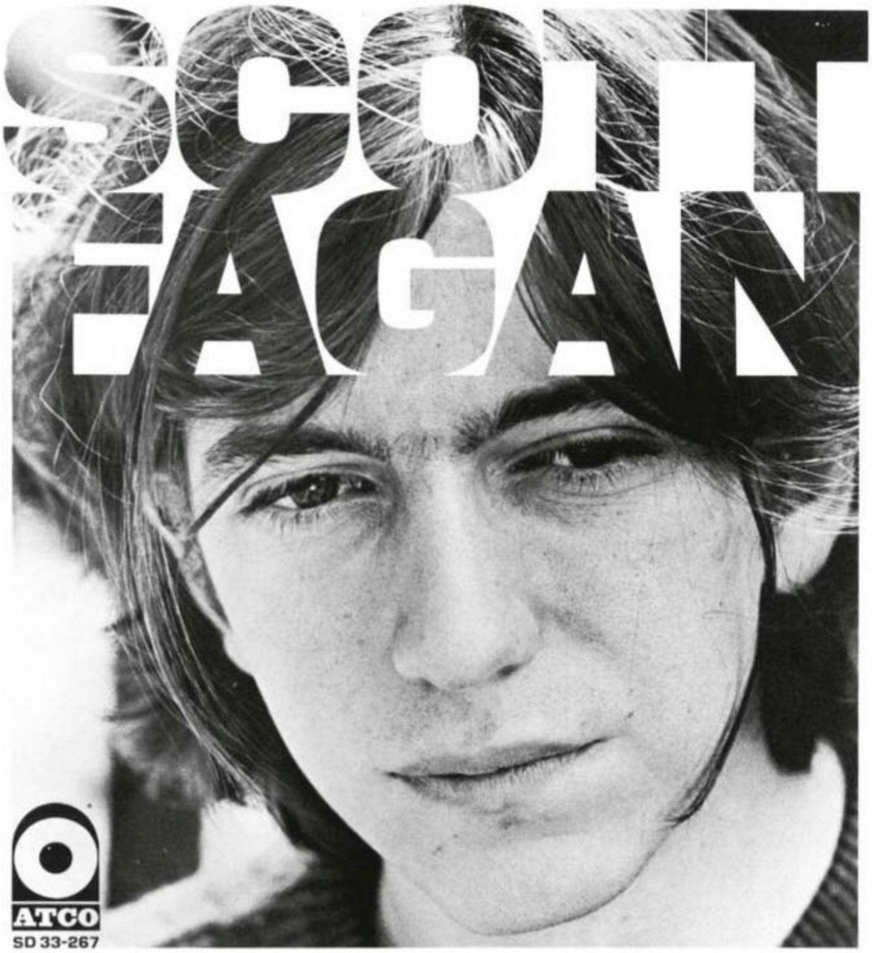

SOUTH ATLANTIC BLUES

ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON ATCO IN 1968
SCOTT FAGAN'S BEWITCHING DEBUT
SOUTH ATLANTIC BLUES
IS A GENUINE LOST CLASSIC
A MYSTICAL, MYTHICAL, DEEPLY-SOULFUL
FOLK-ROCK MASTERPIECE

"A BRILLIANTLY ECCENTRIC WORK"
— MOJO

"A TASTE OF SCOTT WALKER, A FLICKER OF BOWIE, LOU REED AND TIM HARDIN, BUT A SOUND THAT IS PURELY AND UTTERLY FAGAN"
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"RIPE FOR REDISCOVERY"
— THE TIMES

"SCOTT FAGAN'S TIME HAS COME AT LAST"
— THE QUIETUS

REMASTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL TAPES
FOR COMPACT DISC, VINYL AND DIGITAL
ON SAINT CECILIA KNOWS/LIL'FISH RECORDS

Henry Rollins

PASSIONATELY WORKAHOLIC MULTI-PUNK

What music are you currently grooving to?

There's too many good bands in Australia. **Hierophants**' *Parallax Error*, a smart cool garage pop record. And **Sarah Mary Chadwick**'s *9 Classic Tracks*. I find her heartbreakingly open and just beautifully sad. She lives with a woman who has a band called **Summer Flake** who make equally gorgeous music. Also **Ty Segall** and a great young band in LA called **Wand**. Lastly, **Drinks**' *Hermits On Holiday* is cool and weird, one of my favourite albums this year.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Fun House by **The Stooges**. Just because it's a sword that I cannot wield that can cut me to pieces, and I'll never forge one of my own that will be sharper or harder.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I bought a double cassette of **Grand Funk Railroad** *Live*, from Peoples Drug store in Washington, in a panicked fear of having no idea of what I wanted. After 20 million listens I kind of liked it.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

None. I can't play any instruments and I've never aspired to. All I know is how music makes me feel.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't sing, I run through the daily itinerary. I hum melodies, Tears Of A Clown or The Great Pretender.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Damn, man – *Machine Gun Etiquette* by **The Damned**. I play that every weekend, wherever I am. I've been doing it since the days of **Black Flag**.

And your Sunday morning record?

Touring can put me in a melancholic state, so I need records to put me in a happier place – that's **Dinosaur Jr** or **J. Mascis** solo. I live in my mind and my idea of home is a familiar sound.

Henry Rollins tours the UK in January.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Paul Dano

LOVE & MERCY'S YOUNG BRIAN!

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been obsessed with **D'Angelo**'s *Black Messiah* for about six months. That's next level. He's hearing something that is not normal. And I really like **Sufjan Stevens**' *Carrie & Lowell*. Feels so personal and moving. Plus a steady diet of **Neil Young** and **Paul Simon**.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

It's tough. I do think *Pet Sounds* is, you know, one of the five. In mono. It's a gift that keeps on giving. It's very strange how the same song can make me happy or sad, it's reflective of yourself in a way. But Paul Simon's *Paul Simon* is up there for me, Neil Young's *Harvest*, *On The Beach*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Probably **Michael Jackson**'s *Dangerous*, but one of my earliest memories is getting my grandma to take me to The Wiz in Norwalk, Connecticut to buy albums I wasn't allowed to buy at home, like [**Notorious B.I.G.**'s] *Ready To Die*.

Which musician have you ever wanted to be?

Well, I loved what **Brian** [**Wilson**] was hearing in the music. But Paul Simon, **Tom Waits**, Neil Young on his ranch – those are the three artists I'll always go back to.

What do you sing in the shower?

Disney songs. Hakuna Matata. Or **Alanis Morissette**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Depends where I'm going. That **Jackson 5**, **Stevie Wonder**, **Otis Redding** vibe can get me going if I'm going a certain way, or you could go with the **Jay-Z** vibe, or an **ELO** vibe. Where would I be going? Probably trying to find a quiet bar.

And your Sunday morning record?

A certain kind of country music, like **Townes Van Zandt**, **Willie Nelson**, *Nashville Skyline*. If I want to have a cry I'll put on **Mickey Newbury**. And [**Grateful Dead**'s] *American Beauty* – I'm a huge **Jerry Garcia** fan. His voice and his playing.

Youth is released on January 29.

Press Association

HIEROPHANTS
PARALLAX ERROR

NOW PLAYING

- Among Henry Rollins' Australian picks, Hierophants' 2015 album *Parallax Error* scores highly!
- As a nipper Paul Dano went out with his nan scoring hip hop like Biggie Smalls' 1994 LP *Ready To Die*.
- Wanting to play like Battersea-born jazz piano great George Shearing, Judy Dyble was an early convert to the 1962 album *Nat King Cole Sings/George Shearing Plays*.

Judy Dyble

EX-FAIRPORT/ TRADER HORNE VOICE

What music are you currently grooving to?

I don't really listen to any music if I'm writing my own stuff as I'm desperately scared of plagiarising anybody else's songs. But I went to see **Big Big Train** recently, they were fantastic. They've got a new album, *Folklore*, out in early 2016, I think. And in the car I listen to Radio 2 because I love listening to **Ken Bruce**'s programme. He always makes me giggle.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Ooh, that's really difficult, I'm not sure I can answer that. I think *Gael Force* by **Jackie McAuley**'s band **The Poor Mouth**, which is a wonderful album from about 25 years ago. It's quite hard to find a copy because it's been deleted, but it's a brilliant record. Very rocky.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I think it was **George Shearing** and **Nat King Cole**, Let There Be Love. My piano teacher gave me the sheet music for that, actually. It was on the album *Nat King Cole Sings/George Shearing Plays*, where they also did September Song, Fly Me To The Moon, I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)… I really wanted to play like George Shearing.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

You mean, apart from **Harpo Marx**?

What do you sing in the shower?

That would be whatever song I'm trying to learn.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

God, do I ever go out on a Saturday night? Oof! Well, when I was 15, 16 and going out it would have been something like La Bamba by **Ritchie Valens**.

And your Sunday morning record?

Miles Davis's *Sketches Of Spain*. All those songs are just so perfect.

Judy Dyble's Anthology: Part One is out now on Earth.

MOJO

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THEORIES, RANTS, ETC.

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JANUARY 23, 1976. THE SEX PISTOLS' FIRST gig of the year. Their eighth in total. The venue? Watford College, an hour-plus away from London. It was an inauspicious start to the year. And yet, in the ensuing 11 months the Pistols would spearhead the biggest cultural revolution in Britain since The Beatles, creating a frenzy around them that transcended the music they made and changed the attitudes of an entire generation. Four decades later, we examine those 12 months of transformation, speaking to those who were there to reveal new insights on what really happened. It is a fine way to launch into 2016 and to remind ourselves of the simple fact that in the space of a year everything can genuinely change…

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It's true

I would just like to congratulate you on a brilliant MOJO 266. Being a huge David Bowie fan I thought the photos were great, as were both the articles on him. However, the only downside I have is there was no CD in the package as indicated on the cover. Would have liked one.

Ian McNeil, via e-mail

Hope your CD arrived safely, Ian.

Turn it off!

RE MOJO 266's Top 50 of 2015, I am 45 years old and I can't remember a year that has given us such middle-of-the-road bog-standard music, across most genres, with only an honourable mention to Blur and Jessica Pratt , Jim O'Rourke and Dungen. I say my age as it may be I'm getting old. However, in years past when we've had *Deserter's Songs*, *Songs For The Deaf*, *Kid A*, *Soft Bulletin* and more recently Aerial Pink and anything by Hellacopters, I am particularly irked by the Julia Holter album as your Number 1. I bought it after reading so many five-star reviews but felt let down by the ordinariness of it all. I swapped it for the new Shellac album which I would supplant as my idea of a Number 1 album. I live in hope for the new David Bowie, or a new Billy Childish or Kathleen Hanna solo album? I'm sure Julia Holter is a nice lady though.

Louis Batsford, via e-mail

Give me a chance to explain

I'm an old subscriber, and always enjoy the end of year issue. However, something very strange struck me, this year. Amongst your Soundtracks Of The Year in MOJO 266 you listed Sakamoto's Furyo from Milan Records. Furyo is the Japanese title of Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence from 1983, and the Milan CD is very old and has not been re-released in any new form, remaster or anything. So why is it on the list? I dare to ask. Yes, I also like it a lot… But that's not good enough a reason, is it?

Ole Knudsen, Denmark

It is a 2015 reissue, Ole.

He'd have to atone for the sin

Leaving The Unthanks' *Mount The Air*, my favourite album of the year, out of MOJO 266's Top 50 might indicate a communal lapse of memory on your writers' part, but not even including it in the Folk Top 10 can only be the personal responsibility of Colin Irwin. The big silly.

Ken J. Donald, via e-mail

Just a few things

Having (as usual) rushed out and bought this month's edition of MOJO – MOJO 266 – on the day of its release, I was incredibly disappointed to find Gabrielle Aplin's *Light Up The Dark* was not included in your Best Albums of 2015. Now, although I am only 16, I despise the majority of music that has been released in the last five years, but Miss Aplin's album was refreshing and different to any of the other rubbish I've heard churned out over the last few months. Her cover of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's The Power Of Love is also a must-hear, as even though it isn't better than the original it comes pretty darn close. By the way, how about a Hollies, 10cc or OMD article? They're my favourite artists, and I personally believe that all three are horrendously underrated. Thanks, though, for the Laurie Anderson interview. I grew up listening to (and being thoroughly fascinated by) O Superman, so to read about the lady herself through her own words was extremely interesting.

Imogen Bebb, Shropshire

Where is this cassette?

MOJO, you've done it again. I almost had to stop the car the other day when Jesse Winchester's Ghosts came on the excellent Elvis Costello-curated CD with MOJO 265. I looked up Jesse on Google when I got to work, and discovered he died 18 months ago. So now I'm going round in some sort of trance, feeling very emotional. It must be my age (63).

Charlie Taylor, Edinburgh

Why not wait 'til they arrest me?

MOJO 265, page 70: Elvis Costello says [Fleetwood Mac's] Man Of The World is in "a difficult key [F]". Sorry guys, dunno if that info came from Elvis or MOJO, but that song is in D.

Martin Fagan, Bushey, Hertfordshire.

Why've you been following me?

I have been with MOJO from the very beginning and I am proud to say that I have all 266 editions cluttering up my home. In particular, I enjoy your focus on the classic bands. I am more than happy to read your always unique takes on the likes of The Beatles, Stones, Lou Reed and so on. However, one of my main motivations in buying your magazine is the hope that there might one day be an article on two of the UK's greatest songwriters – Iain and Gavin Sutherland – and their band The Sutherland Brothers & Quiver. I am now inured to disappointment because in 265 editions, they have been sadly absent from your pages. Between 1970 and 1979 Iain and Gavin made eight albums. At least two of these records, *Dream Kid* and *Reach For The Sky*, are bona-fide classics. And yet strangely this band is hardly ever referred to by the mainstream music press. What is going on? Are music journalists simply writing them off as purveyors of guilty-pleasure pop or do journalists hold a grudge against them because of the ubiquitous success of Rod Stewart's version of Sailing? It's hard to tell because no one ever writes about them. Lesser bands have been given shedloads of attention: see, for example, the Membranes (groan!) in MOJO 265. MOJO is rightly viewed as a reliable arbiter of the UK's music culture, past and present, but you would never guess from reading your magazine that The Sutherland Brothers & Quiver actually ever existed and sadly this means that their wonderful back catalogue goes largely unheard. Please rectify the situation. And how about something too on another UK treasure, Clive Gregson?

Steve Chapman, Thackley, Bradford

I've been looking for someone special

I'd just like to start by saying what a brilliant magazine you have, the articles and features are absolutely fascinating, even about artistes I didn't think I would be particularly interested in.

I would like to thank you for the article on my hero (one of them at least) Jeff Lynne, the driving force of the Electric Light Orchestra, whose albums over the years have provided a soundtrack to my life, as I'm sure has been the case with many other people. There is one question that I've often pondered though, and that is, what would have happened to Jeff and his music if he had not been given the chance to join The Move by Roy Wood and subsequently form ELO? Roy is simply a musical genius and another one of my heroes.

I realise that when Roy left ELO, Jeff and the rest of the band could have sunk without trace and obviously much hard work went into not letting that happen. I saw on a documentary a while ago, where one of Jeff's previous band members from the Idle Race stated that Jeff was visibly wilting through not being able to write a hit single for them.

I believe that Jeff's great talent would have come through somehow in the end, but I think it's also true to say that Roy Wood gave Jeff a platform and the great opportunity he needed. I just think it was a pity that they couldn't have worked together for longer. Some of Roy's songs on the *Wizzard Brew* LP were, I think, meant for the *ELO 2* album, during which time he and Jeff decided to go their separate ways. Listening to those again make you wonder just how ELO would have turned out if he had not left so soon. It could have been very interesting to say the least.

Clyde Black, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Disorder, not order

I really enjoy the whole *Zeitgeist* and vibe of MOJO 265's Elvis Costello CD. Funny, after doing so, I go over the tracklist and visually appreciate the insane improbability of anything approaching such a cohesive aesthetic statement. A heartfelt muse admirably pursued and executed. Kudos Mr. C! I also loved your nod in the direction of cover star Elvis Costello by using quotes from the film No Surrender as letters page headings. The first quote ("highlight of me act") referred to a recently deceased rabbit and was the excuse used by the hapless club magician played by Mr McManus to explain why he wouldn't go on. It would be great if MOJO's referencing of this overlooked British classic, written by the great Alan Bleasdale, led to a reappraisal of the film and perhaps a long overdue Blu-ray release.

Joe Donohoe, Jersey

Thanks Joe. We pick a different cover-artist-related film with each issue. See if you can guess this month's movie.

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16FOR2016

NEW SIDES OF THE ARCS

Dan Auerbach predicts a year of new music and collaborations with his new group – and reveals the fate of The Black Keys!

1

Dan Auerbach ended 2015 on a high. Bringing to a close The Black Keys' Turn Blue world tour with a series of summer festival headline appearances, he threw himself into his new project, The Arcs, releasing the band's debut album, *Yours Dreamily*, in September before hitting the road once again for a set of inaugural shows.

Joining Auerbach in The Arcs are Dap-Kings keyboard player/drummer Homer Steinweiss, producer Richard Swift (a member of The Shins, also on drums), Leon Michels (co-founder of Truth And Soul records) and Nick Movshon (bass). The latter trio have all been involved in the Black Keys touring band at different points in time, but Auerbach describes writing, recording and playing live with them as a liberating experience.

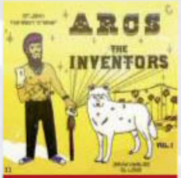
"We've made music together for years," he says. "But this is different and it feels amazing. I'm playing in a way I've never played before. It's brand new for me."

While Auerbach is keen to point out that the rise of The Arcs doesn't mean the end of The Black Keys ("I'm in constant touch with Pat," he says of his Keys co-pilot, Patrick Carney), he is already relishing the prospect of completing a second album with his new band – something he may well have done by the time you read this. Indeed, while The Arcs wrote a reported 75 songs for the debut, few if any are likely to make it onto Album Number 2.

"We have another set of songs and we probably need about three days in the studio to finish the album," says Dan. "I did a lot of writing with David Berman which I am really excited about. He's really incredible. I'm feeling very blessed at the moment in terms of the music we're making."

Silhouettes

Upward curve: Dan Auerbach fronts The Arcs on-stage; (bottom, from left) Homer Steinweiss, Leon Michels, Richard Swift, Nick Movshon, and Auerbach; (below) The Arcs Vs. The Inventors *Vol 1*.



"I'M PLAYING IN A WAY I'VE NEVER PLAYED BEFORE... I FEEL I CAN GO WHEREVER I WANT."

Songwriting sessions with Berman – the Silver Jews leader who reportedly retired from music over six years ago – are just one of the projects that Auerbach has been involved with recently. Indeed, The Arcs have just released the first of several planned collaborative releases, under the banner of The Arcs v. The Inventors *Vol 1* sees them teaming up with Dr. John and Los Lobos and Latin Playboys man, David Hidalgo.

"It's an extension of the Arcs sensibility in that anything can happen," says Auerbach. "We were in LA and talking about the two Latin Playboy albums, and we wondered whether David Hidalgo was in town. It turns out he was. Then we wondered whether we could get some studio time, and we could. So we just went in to see what would happen. It turned out Mac [aka Dr. John] was in town, so we did stuff with him. It all just happened."

So who are the next set of Inventors that The Arcs have lined up? "We have some people in mind, but we don't want to blow the surprise," he says, coyly. Asked whether he may be working with Chrissie Hynde – a long-time friend from his Akron hometown, who joined The Arcs on-stage at their London show, performing I Go To Sleep and Baby, I Love You – he remains equally reticent.

Despite his reluctance to give anything else away, Auerbach has been using his well-honed production skills to make a new album with Leo Bud Welch. "He's a gospel singer and electric guitar player from Mississippi. He's in his late seventies," he explains. "I had him come up [to Nashville] and we made this really weird psychedelic gospel album. It's all traditional gospel songs. It's really, really cool."

While Auerbach is still looking for a home for Welch's album, he is equally looking forward to more shows with The Arcs next year. "There'll be more recording, more Inventors, more shows and festivals," he concludes. "Right now, I feel I can go wherever I want and that feels really good."

Phil Alexander

MORE2016 TURN OVER JIM JARMUSCH'S STOOGES DOCUMENTARY...

Getty Images, Richard Swift

ON!

A FILTERED PREVIEW OF THE YEAR TO COME PLUS THRILLING DISPATCHES FROM PLANET **MOJO**

16FOR2016

PIXX

Electronic folk voice brings ambient pop intrigue.

2

Filmed on the beach at Rye in Sussex, the promo for Pixx's song Fall In is a work of lovelorn morbidity. Accompanying the shimmering, dreampop title song from 2015's debut EP, it portrays the 19-year-old singer floating out to sea before revealing an unnerving twist. The truth was less glamorous. "I was in and out of the sea from 12 o'clock until 9 at night, and it was bloody freezing," recalls Hannah Rodgers. "My lips were turning blue and they kept having to apply lipstick… I got tonsillitis after that."

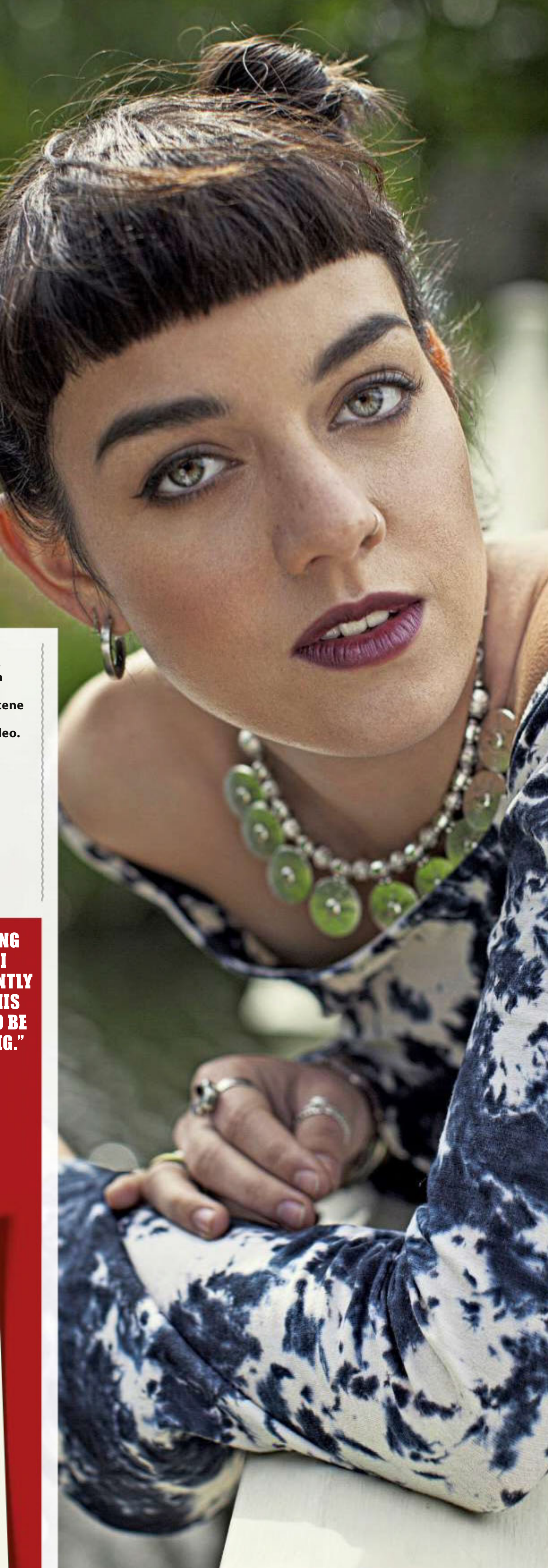
It's not the only way she's grafted for her art. Hailing from Chipstead in Surrey, and awoken to music by her singer-songwriter dad, she was educated at the BRIT School in Croydon. "Everyone imagines it being like High School Musical," she says. "People used to always get mugged outside. But if you go there for the music then it literally is just music."

A teenage folk nut who got into electronica, she released a Hawleyesque debut single I Wake under her own name in 2013. She took the Pixx persona in 2014, borrowing the name from her grandmother. "Everyone used to call her that, because she really does look like a tiny little pixie," laughs Rodgers. "I like the idea of carrying her name because she's always been strong hearted and good willed. She's quite happy about it."

After signing to the 4AD label, The Fall In EP was, she says, "written about a dark phase of my life. They were real stories based on things that had happened, so I decided to match the music with the meaning of the songs, which is something I hadn't really taken that seriously before." Singing in a voice that mixes clarity with the etheric, her tales of shattered love combine folk, electronic and subtle jazz and R&B elements, with an edge of eeriness, particularly on the almost Albarn-like Deplore. As well as staples including Joni Mitchell, Nick Drake and Anne Briggs, she cites Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works 85-92* as a standby album. "At school, I listened to that over and over. It was so good to have that phase, to open up a new path to that ambient music which is still really melodic and catchy."

Her debut album, due in 2016 and recorded in Brooklyn with Unknown Mortal Orchestra bassist Jacob Portrait, promises a more varied listen than Fall In. "I want to keep that feel going," she says, "but I'm starting to write more about subjects beyond my personal experiences – about catcalling and the refugee crisis, for example. It's sounding a bit more upbeat, too. I always had the habit of writing quite downtempo songs but I [illegible] g."

> **"PLAYING LIVE, I CONSTANTLY HAD THIS URGE TO BE DANCING."**



Chipstead sister: Pixx, aka Hannah Rodgers; (below) a scene from her Deplore video.

16 FOR 2016

3 THE BEATLES

Ron Howard's documentary about **The Beatles**' years as a touring band will hit screens late in 2016. From early days at The Cavern and The Iron Door in Liverpool to the farewell at Candlestick Park in 1966, it'll be a feast of live footage, some from private sources. Said Howard, "[The Beatles'] impact on popular culture and the human experience cannot be exaggerated."

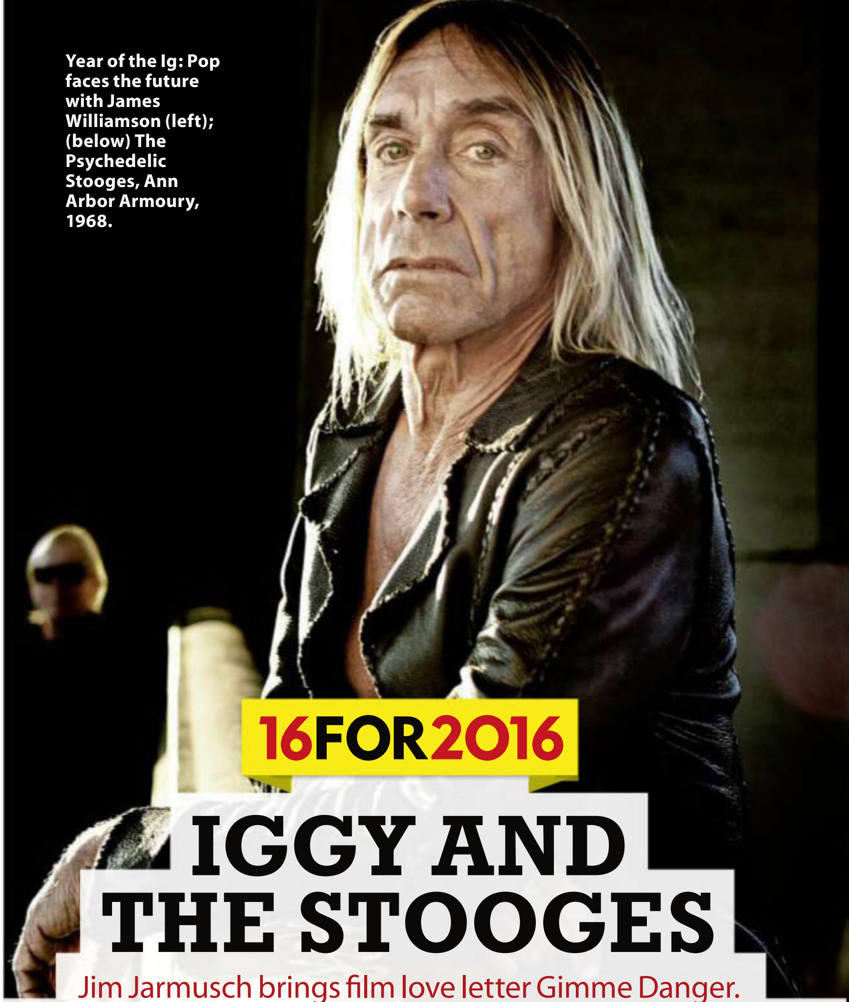
4 BRIAN ENO

Launching at the Natural History Museum on January 22, **Eno** provides original music for the exhibition Otherworlds: Visions Of Our Solar System. Curated by artist Michael Benson using raw images of the planets from NASA and the European Space Agency, the "77 composite images represent a joining of art and science." Eno will also release a new studio album in 2016.

5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Starting on May 13 at the Liverpool Echo Arena, the **Manics** play shows to mark the 20th anniversary of their *Everything Must Go* album. Expect two sets a night – the original LP plus greatest hits, "curios" and new material. Support comes from **Editors**, except for the Swansea Stadium date, where **Super Furry Animals** and **Public Service Broadcasting** play.

Dan Kendall, Dean Chalkley, Steve Bober, PA



Year of the Ig: Pop faces the future with James Williamson (left); (below) The Psychedelic Stooges, Ann Arbor Armoury, 1968.

16FOR2016

IGGY AND THE STOOGES

Jim Jarmusch brings film love letter Gimme Danger.

6

From 1968 to 1974, The Stooges wreaked havoc on and off stage, and delivered what are now acknowledged to be three of the most influential rock'n'roll albums of all time. Then, in 2003, came the most unexpected of reunions: world tours, new legions of fans, and a massive gathering of accolades and awards followed.

Now for the documentary overview. Gimme Danger has been more than three years in the making, and is the work of film-maker Jim Jarmusch, a life-long fan of The Stooges who had already directed Iggy in the movies Dead Man and Coffee And Cigarettes.

"Gimme Danger, our film about The Stooges, is more an essay than a document," explains Jarmusch. "It's our love letter to possibly the greatest band in rock'n'roll history, and presents their story, their influences and their impact, complete with some never-before-seen footage and photographs."

Taken from newly dusted off reels found in the attics of Detroit, discoveries include "best quality" film of The Stooges at the Delta Pop Festival in 1969, an unidentified '68 gig, Iggy's celebrated peanut butter slewing crowd invasion at the Cincinnati Pop Festival in 1970 and a late-'73 New York show. There are also unseen interviews with all The Stooges, with moments of contrary story-telling from the late Ron Asheton. Photographs include the earliest known group shot, minutes before their coming out at the Ann Arbor Armoury in early 1968.

Augmenting the legacy further are previously unheard recordings by The Chosen Few. This Detroit band's ranks included at various times guitarist James Williamson, founding Stooge Ron on bass, plus lead singer Scott Richardson. Richardson was Iggy's roommate at the time, when the future front-Stooge worked at Discount Records in Ann Arbor. Jack White's Third Man Records plans to release a 45 of The Chosen Few's 1966 tracks Inflamed and I'm An Explosion, with more of Richardson's work to follow.

As for Gimme Danger, expect it around March. "Like The Stooges and their music, Gimme Danger is a little wild, messy, emotional, funny, primitive, and sophisticated in the most unrefined way," concludes Jarmusch. "Long live The Stooges!"

Robert Matheu

MORE2016 NEW ALBUMS FROM RAY DAVIES, RADIOHEAD, GORILLAZ AND THE RETURN OF ANOHNI...

16FOR2016

RAY DAVIES

Ray Davies plots a new album and stage show, and brings Kinks news.

7 "I've started being embroiled," says Ray Davies. He's talking about his next LP, which will transpose 2013's memoir-travelogue Americana: The Kinks, The Road And The Perfect Riff into album form. "It's a real challenge. You adapt books into films and stage plays but it's very unusual to adapt a book into a record… I'm very excited, and daunted. I don't think it's going to be like anything else I've ever done… it's the biggest record project I've ever attempted."

Working at his north London Konk studios with his touring band and regular guitar foil Bill Shanley, recording began in late 2015. Certain songs date back a decade, some like Rock'n'Roll Cowboys have been played live, while other lyrics, including A Long Drive Home To Tarzana, originally appeared in the book. These will be given new musical frames, some incorporating New Orleans jazz and possibly other quintessentially American forms, though Ray stresses, "I'm not attempting to the copy the American style. It's an *hommage*, and to do with my journey as a person, so I want to keep as much of me still in it. There's a song called The Deal, for example, which I sing in a real London accent.

"A Long Drive Home To Tarzana symbolises that journey people have to their own idealistic place in America," he adds. "It's a place in California. People I knew that lived there, it's their kind of Nirvana, when they've been searching for their version of America. It's about my journey too, but it's also about this incredible place, America."

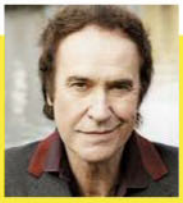
After the award-winning Kinks musical Sunny Afternoon, he also has plans to turn Americana into a stage presentation. "I'd like to see it in a theatre setting, well staged and minimalist, rather than just concerts," he says.

King Konk: dreaming of America, Ray Davies stands at the controls of his Hornsey studio with engineer Guy Massey.

> "IT'S THE BIGGEST RECORD PROJECT I'VE EVER ATTEMPTED."

"I've already done a very basic presentation, at the beginning of last year, using rear projections, spoken word… it's not going to have a pit band or anything, it'll be something I can do with five, six people. It's always nice to be in a theatre and to pick up somebody else's reaction, because you're getting the same emotion. Keep entertainment alive!"

In 2016 Davies will also work on another book, a short volume that picks up where The Kinks' masterful 1969 concept LP *Arthur (Or The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire)* left off ("To get that staged would be great," says Ray). And reports that The Kinks are to reform for a charity gig to save Hornsey Town Hall – where they gigged as schoolboys – from developers? "It's a great old building and I'm doing what I can," says Ray. "We'll put an evening together, or maybe a couple of evenings. [Regarding The Kinks] I can't promise anything, but if it happens it will happen very suddenly, without great hoop-la. We've never been savvy enough to get the 02 Arena booked six months in advance to hype it up. We'll do it on a whim, if at all. But I'd love to get the guys to play a few guest spots on *Americana*."



FACT SHEET

Title: *Americana*
Due: summer
Producer: Ray Davies
Songs: Rock'n'Roll Cowboys, A Long Drive Home To Tarzana and "another song concerning the British Invasion". Ray's 2004 shooting in New Orleans is also addressed: "It's been very cathartic for me as well," he adds.
The Buzz: "It's a balancing act, a judgment call between making a storyline and also making a good record. So we'll see how it lands."
Ray Davies

16FOR2016

8 **RADIOHEAD** The ninth album saga continues: Jonny Greenwood has revealed on social media that "lots [of material] has been recorded", and added that Radiohead hope to tour in 2016. It's also

might be included in the tracklist.

9 **RONNIE SPECTOR** Out in April, *English Heart* is the lead Ronette's "personal love letter to 1960s Britain". It features pop covers like Mick Jagger/Andrew Loog Oldham co-write I'd r Be With The Boys, retitled I'd Much Rather Be With The Girls, plus songs by The Animals and The Beatles.

10 **THE LAST SHADOW PUPPETS** Alex Turner and Miles Kane's side project finally follow 2008's *The Age Of The Understatement* in spring. At press, snippets heard include orchestral discord and James Bond theme hints. Arranger Owen Pallett says the LF crosses "the threshold into classic status."

11 **GORILLAZ** Damon Albarn has suggested that Gorillaz's fifth album will return to pop-powered hip hop. For his part, visuals man Jamie Hewlett shared an Instagram'd pic of Ziggy Stardust, leading to speculation that David Bowie would appear on the set. Albarn also says he has a new The Good, The Bad & The Queen album written.

Rex Features, WENN, Jessica Gilbert

16FOR2016

ANOHNI

The Artist Formerly Known As Antony Hegarty presents a new eco-awareness, with disco fever.

12

2016 doesn't only herald the first studio album in six years from the "lead singer of Antony And The Johnsons", as his record company Rough Trade describe him, with a new sound and new collaborators, but a new identity too: Anohni.

"I've always identified as transgender, but I was living with it in an ambiguous space, and I got to the point where I wanted to honour that aspect of my identity," she says. "It's what defines my perspective, not just on the trans issue, but feminism, environmentalism, spirituality… I wanted a spirit name, which I've been using for a couple of years. Nobody in my personal life calls me Antony. So I'm happy now for everyone to get with the programme!"

Anohni's album *Hopelessness* was recorded with co-producers and electronic maximalists Hudson Mohawke and Oneohtrix Point Never. "It's a really intense, jubilant record, super-pop, my favourite kind," she contends. "My work until now has been quite pastoral, more interior, and I wanted to make a dance record, something both disarming and that would lift the spirits. Hudson's such a genius at making these heart-rending, rousing anthemic progressions. Dan too knows how to cook up an emotional frenzy. And then I'm singing, just trying to be strong, just trying to vigorously participate in the conversation of where we're at."

"Where we're at", is the ongoing furore about ecological disaster, fears that played into both 2009's *The Crying Light* and 2010's *Swanlights* LPs, and the new (back-to-pastoral) track Manta Ray from the Discovery Channel's forthcoming documentary Racing Extinction.

But while Antony's environmentalism was defined by grief, Anohni's is, "more pointed and aggressive and intense. [Lead single] 4 Degrees, for example, is about my own complicity. We have to be honest with how we feel. But if I was advocating hopelessness, I wouldn't have bothered releasing a record."

Though Anohni doesn't discount more orchestral dates in the future, this year's stage shows will be all about the new album: "I've played out the other songs for the time being," she says. The new show is still under wraps, "but it's quite unconventional. It's more conceptual a presentation and several performers will be involved. It'll be interesting, challenging and hopefully beautiful."

In Anohni's view, "in a hundred years time, people won't recall ISIS, or all this brutal lying by corporations, all they'll care about is what we did about climate change. Right now, I'm just putting my energy to its best purpose, and pushing the boundaries of what pop can contain. Thom Yorke said it was impossible for him to write a protest song, it would be too embarrassing. I beg to differ. I think our medium is vastly under-utilised and artists have a responsibility, as everyone does, to use every means at their disposal, because everything's at stake. So let's not be afraid of the truth, and let's dance our heads off as we're doing it!"

Martin Aston

The Green Genie: Anohni brings ecological awareness to the Primavera Festival; (left) a new portrait by Dutch fashion photographers Inez and Vinoodh.

> **"LET'S NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TRUTH, AND LET'S DANCE OUR HEADS OFF."**

MORE2016 TURN OVER FOR PREDICTIONS BY MATT BERRY, *PET SOUNDS*, AND NEWS…

16 FOR 2016

13 BRIAN WILSON

On April 29 at the Levitation Festival in Austin, Texas, Brian will again play *Pet Sounds* live in its entirety, 50 years after the milestone LP's release. With him will be **Al Jardine** and **Blondie Chaplin**. Also on the Levitation bill: **Lee Perry**, **Flying Lotus** and **Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats**. More *Pet Sounds* dates will follow.

14 STEEL PULSE

Due in late 2016, the Dreadtown movie marks 40 years of the Handsworth reggae institution and will tell how they, "took the Black British experience to the world". **Danny Glover** narrates, and **John Lydon**, **Matt Groening**, **Rita Marley** and **Burning Spear** are among those interviewed. "Hours of archive footage and music never seen or heard before," are promised.

15 JACK WHITE

Jack White's new 10,000 square foot vinyl plant will open in spring 2016, behind the new Third Man record shop at 441 West Canfield Street in Detroit. As well as expanding vinyl output, the pressing process – using German-made Newbilt gear – will be available for record-buyers to view via specially placed windows.

16 MATT BERRY PREDICTS

And finally! The velvet-voiced thesp and musician foresees what's coming in 2016…

Change Will Be Mourned, Unnecessarily

It's like, people who have this romantic idea of 1950s Soho and get up in arms about it disappearing… it's not, it's just changing like it always has. The other stuff that happens in London, like not saying "hi" to anyone, will be the same. Life will get more challenging though – you could be terrorised!

The Beatles Will Reform

It'd be great if Ringo would drum on Macca's new experimental album wouldn't it? You know, think of all the goodwill and how happy people would be. But The Jam are never going to reform. That's a band I'd like to see.

Social Media Will Remain The Same, But More So

How much more over-sharing or immediate can we get? What else can you do? Give blood to one another? Have something that reads your mind and broadcasts it? Exactly. But people are becoming anti-Facebook – something's going to come along and get rid of it.

Britain Won't Vote For Brexit

We're generally smarter and more cosmopolitan than we think we are. Like, everyone's eating Thai now, and they never would've done that before. Thailand isn't in Europe of course, but my point stands. Plus, think of our human rights – someone'd try and restore the death penalty. It'd be madness.

Viewers, Don't Panic.

We've had two really strong years of TV drama in Britain and that will basically continue. There's no point trying to compete with Netflix costume things, and you don't need vampires, just keep it simple with fantastic acting. I'd commission more 1950s Britain stuff – Rillington Place, in three or four parts. I'd play a barrister.

Up the Maypole: Matt Berry, aka Reynholm, Toast, etc etc, gazes into the future. "I could be maintained as a disembodied head. That'd be fine"; (below) EU flag-waver.

"MEN WOULDN'T GET PISSED AND MISBEHAVE IF THEY HAD A BOWLER HAT ON."

Men's Fashion Will Lack Direction

Men's fashion will continue to be faceless, and dateless – maybe not for the very young, who knows what they'll wear?! They always say bowler hats will come back at the end of the year, and I wish they would. Men wouldn't get pissed and misbehave if they had their bowler hat on.

DIY Producers Set The Pace

Producers who record in their bedrooms will win the awards. It makes for a purer piece of art. I start on a new album in two weeks, made with wooden instruments, whether they're guitars or synths. My studio's next to the bedroom, so it's a waste of time sleeping in there.

Brian Blessed Is Going To Go Into Space

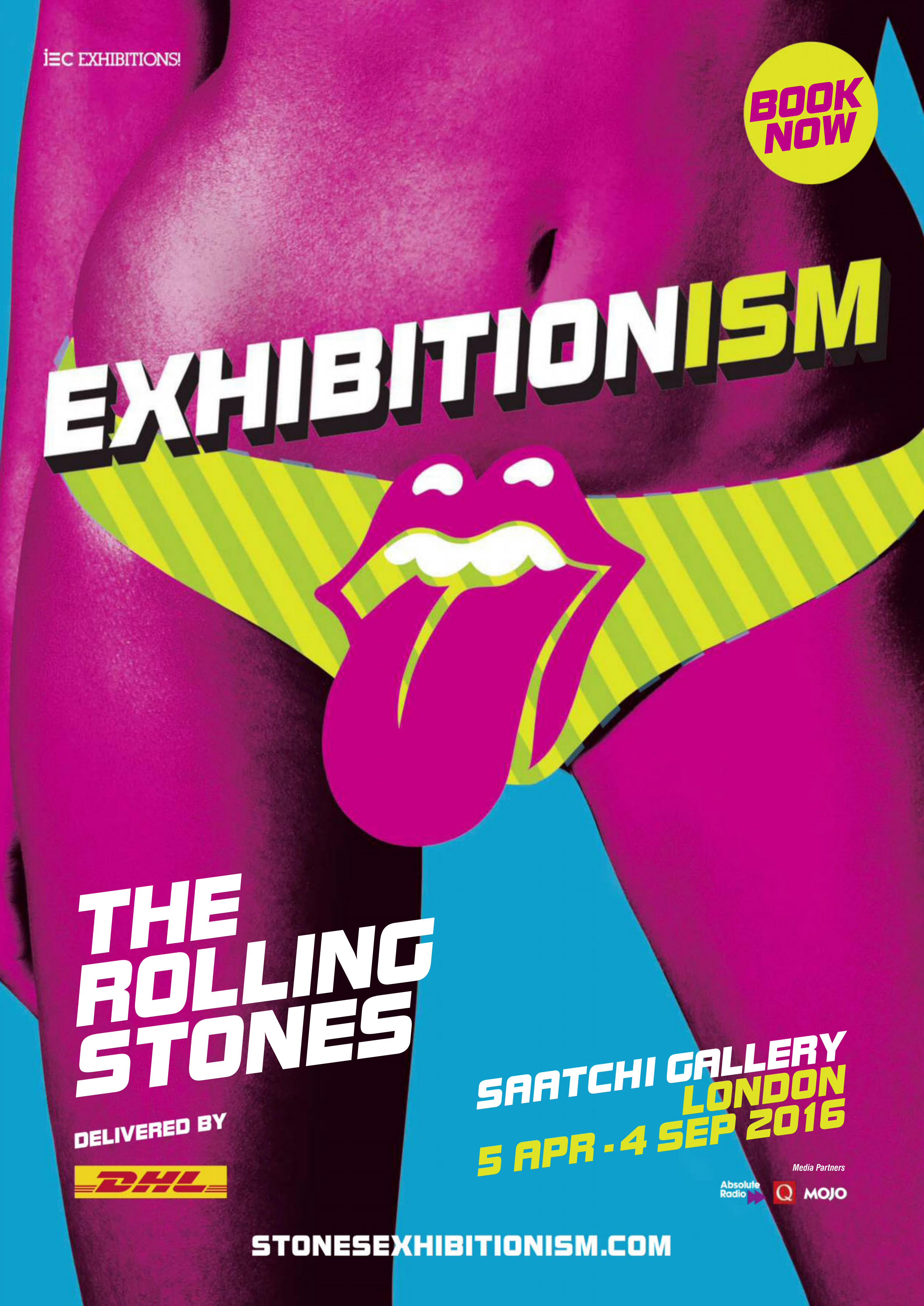
Seriously, he said it. I'd absolutely love to go into space too, just to look back at the Earth. I hope I'm not dead when it becomes a reality – I suppose I could be maintained as a disembodied head, that'd be fine. The future's going to be good, definitely.

We Will, As A Country, Try More Things

I'm talking about food, again. Forget orange food – the beans and fish fingers we used to eat. We're just getting more colourful. The Hungry House online food ordering thing has played on our laziness, in a positive way. You can't be arsed to make something, but you can still try all these different curries.

Matt Berry & The Maypoles' Live is out now on Acid Jazz.

Alamy (6)



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Letter from South America: Boogarins spurn the obvious path (from left) Ynaiã Benthroldo, Benke Ferraz, Dino Almeida, Raphael Vaz.

Beatriz Perini

MOJORISING

BOOGARINS

Tropicália-infused indie rock Brazilians talk sensual botany, football, and dissolving your dreams.

“The name of our album is *Manual*, it’s the same in Portuguese as it is in English,” explains Benke Ferraz, one of the four hirsute Brazilians crowded around a laptop for a comunicação via Skype from São Paulo, where Boogarins played in the balmy outdoors last night. Dino Almeida, the band’s co-founder with Ferraz, quickly interjects: “It means to work with your hands, step by step. Like a construction guide.”

Hailing from Goiânia, the verdant capital of the central state of Goiás, the pair began by recording in their parents’ basements with borrowed equipment and home-made technology, only forming a band (bassist Raphael Vaz and drummer Ynaiã Benthroldo make four) after recording their 2013 album debut *As Plantas Que Curam*.

Step by step, Boogarins have earned the highest international profile of any Brazilian band since Sepultura, touring incessantly, though the sensual heatwave of their tropicália-tainted psych-rock adventure is worlds apart from dark metal.

But neither do Boogarins regard themselves as modern-day torchbearers for psychedelia. “Some call us psychedelic because they can relate us to [tropicália legends] Os Mutantes,” says Ferraz, the band’s multi-instrumental gear-head. “But we would say, ‘indie rock’. Goiânia has mostly country music, but we have three or four small indie rock festivals too.”

They sing in Portuguese – “it’s important here, some in Brazil respect us more and connect us to the pop scene,” explains Ferraz – though lyric book translations shed light on their trippier aspects; for example, “Lost girl in the blue sky” is the opening lyric to *As Plantas Que Curam*, aka The Plants That Heal, while bogarim is a native jasmine. “I had a botanic book,” Ferraz recalls. “It said bogarim is a flower than smells like pure love. It’s how the songs feel to us. Things just appear in front of us and later we notice how they connect. It’s like the hand of God!”

> **“THINGS JUST APPEAR IN FRONT OF US... LIKE THE HAND OF GOD!”**
> **Benke Ferraz**

This “hand of God” is not a reference to the infamous incident in 1986’s World Cup when Argentina’s Diego Maradona punched the ball to England’s goal. But football has played a part in shaping *Manual*, firing up Boogarins’ socio-political side.

“We did this on the first album too, connecting to modern times,” says Almeida. “When the World Cup came to Brazil last year, we had many riots, and talk of bribery. It will happen again next year with the Olympics.”

Or as *Manual*’s subtitle puts it, Ou Guia Livre De Dissolução Dos Sonhos – in English, Or Free Guide To The Dissolution Of Dreams. “Sometimes we are dreaming, sometimes we are thinking, it’s just a way to concentrate your head and think better,” Almeida concludes. Ferraz has the last word: “But our guide is not a real method. You really don’t need to follow anything!”

Martin Aston

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Os Mutantes, Spirit, Santana, Black Peaches, The Besnard Lakes.
- They first thought of calling themselves Os Boogarins, until they realised it was too close to Os Mutantes. “We love how they made Portuguese songs in an amazing, fluid way,” says Ferraz. “But we are not a covers band.”
- Boogarins have been praised to the skies in South America, but they still recommend listening to other Goiânia greats, such as Black Drawing Chalks and Hellbenders.

KEY TRACKS

- Lucifernandis
- Falsa Folha De Rosto
- Avalanche

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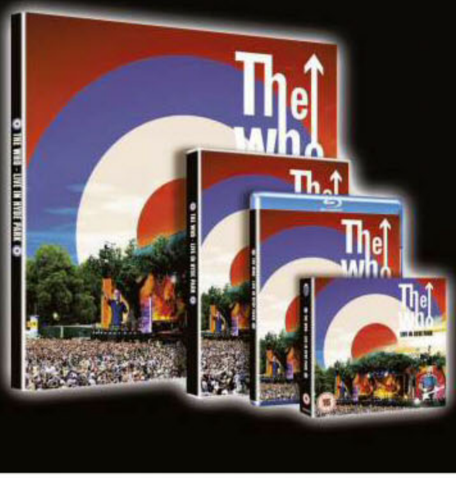

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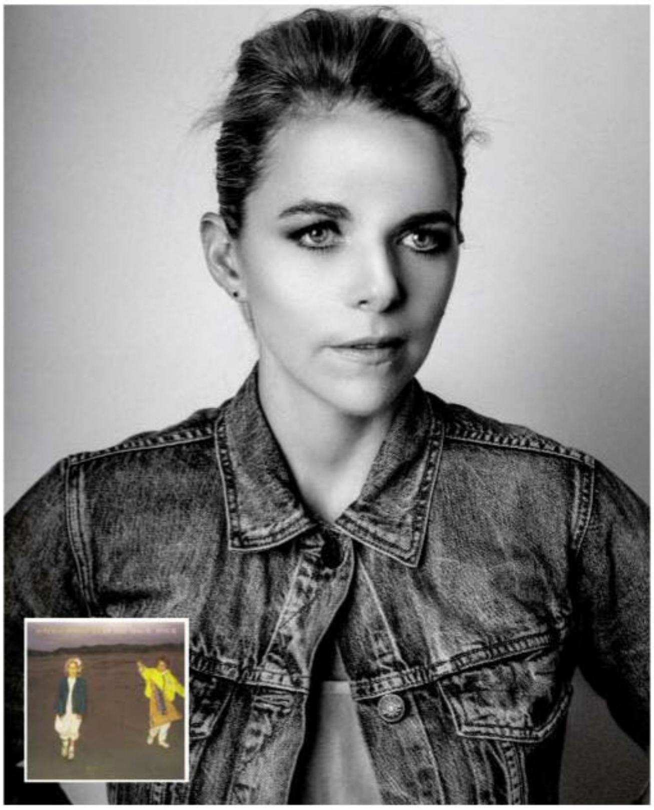

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MOJOPLAYLIST

Calling out around the world – are you ready for joyous melodies, improper post-disco and acoustic doom?

1 MINNETONKA

BIRDS OF PREY

It's another production from mixing desk demon Bill Ryder-Jones, but Mancunian singer Emma Leatherbarrow's vehicle suggests no hirsute rockers with a Love fixation. Instead, this hushed, ambient synth pop conveys mountain summits, lucid dreams and conflicted love affairs. There are also suggestions of Angelo Badalamenti's music for Twin Peaks, with subtle variations of mood, celestial choirs and deftly employed guitar effects pedals. An album follows later in the year: her name, meanwhile, relates to the lake in Minnesota referenced in Prince's Purple Rain movie.
Find it: *SoundCloud*

Tooth, claw and concrete coastal defences: Emma 'Minnetonka' Leatherbarrow prepares to swoop; (below) Prince floats like a feather.

2 **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** PARTY LIGHTS

From *The Ties That Bind: The River Collection* out-takes box, Bruce sticks the knife in with a song of knackered parents missing going out, and chasing that feeling of freedom one last time.
Find it: *YouTube*

3 **WILD NOTHING** TO KNOW YOU

Analogue bloopage, cascading guitars, the olde krauty beat and faraway vocals make this advance cut from the Virginia indie-men's third a treat, like early-'80s Manchester with a bucket of Owsley chucked over its raincoat.
Find it: *YouTube*

4 **SVARTE GREINER** TUNNEL OF LOVE

From the 'acoustic doom' Norwegian's 2009 LP *Kappe*, a stygian gravitational trap of swirling debris and nameless dread, like a night spent in the mysterious Zone of the Strugatsky brothers' Soviet sci-fi classic Roadside Picnic.
Find it: *YouTube*

5 **THE I DON'T CARES** KING OF AMERICA

Paul Westerberg and Julianna Hatfield's new band bring a melodious rocker protesting the over-medicated, minimum wage, ignored plight of the people Donald Trump hates. The album *Wild Stab*'s out soon, suggesting that Westerberg be acclaimed King of the USA – and why not?
Find it: *YouTube*

6 **PRINCE** CREEP

The Purple One's eight-minute cover of the Radiohead cornerstone, live at Coachella in 2008, finally released with his blessing. Soulful and splashed with molten guitar, it teases out the original's self-laceration, conducts a falsetto sing-along and unleashes the rock.
Find it: *YouTube*

> **"PRINCES TEASES OUT CREEP'S SELF-LACERATION."**

ROKSAN MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

7 **THE WIMMINS' INSTITUTE** (DON'T CALL ME) SUGAR

Brilliant, strident reworking of Brown Sugar by the self-styled "All-woman, pop-punk, jam-free foursome" fuelled by brass, guitars and righteous fury: "Don't call me sugar/I'm not your food."
Find it: *facebook.com/thewimminsinstitute*

8 **PROFESSOR LONGHAIR** BIG CHIEF

With whistling, brass and tinkling piano from the New Orleans keyboard wizard, this 1964 monster also features mighty beats from late Crescent City drumming great Smokey Johnson.
Find it: *YouTube*

9 **EARL BRUTUS** ON ME NOT IN ME

They called the '90s lager situationists "Kraftwerk caught wanking by their dads" – if they were, this is the song that did it. After the icy synth-minimalism and phone box sex card lamenting, wild baroque rock guitars! From the just-reissued *Your Majesty… We Are Here*.
Find it: *SoundCloud*

10 **JACK & ARCHY MARSHALL** SWELL

From the soundtrack of A New Place 2 Drown – a multimedia project by King Krule and his artist brother Jack. A book and film, soundtracked by ghostly dub, itchy hip hop and jazzy electronics.
Find it: *A New Place 2 Drown* (XL)

11 **DON GERE** THERE'S A STAR IN YOU

From Finders Keepers' *Plastic Dance Volume One* – an all-killer comp of misbegotten, shady and improper post-punk and post-disco – we've been digging this "cosmic rock/cyber jam glam" cut by the California visionary who soundtracked Werewolves On Wheels.
Find it: *YouTube*

12 **ANIMAL COLLECTIVE** FLORIDA

It's rhythm and squelch as the Baltimore crew return with this head-rush of drums, computer game glitches and joyous melodies.
Find it :*YouTube*

13 **NADA SURF** BELIEVE YOU'RE MINE

Swooning with melody, this 'up' heartbreaker from the band's forthcoming *You Know Who You Are* album charms as it mines emotional voids.
Find it: *SoundCloud*

14 **FRANÇOISE HARDY** SONG FOR WINTER

Is it still frosty where you are? If so, pull up your collar or throw down another sandbag and embrace the chilly glow from this 1970 beaut in which Ms H becomes the embodiment of l'hiver.
Find it: *YouTube*

15 **FUSCHIA** ME AND MY KITE

Is Tony Durant singing about a toy, or a small bird of prey? Either are possible in this gentle yet unsettling slice of prog whimsy from Exeter-based art rockers' hard-to-find 1971 LP, just reissued by Esoteric.
Find it: *YouTube*

16 **THE ROUNDTABLE** ELI'S COMING

Someone reissue this glorious 1969 crossover where early music historian and musician David Munrow joined forces with Brit jazz sessioners to concoct a thudding Hammond, crumhorn and breakbeats cover of Laura Nyro's 1968 soul-gospel affirmation.
Find it: *YouTube*

17 **ADD N TO (X)** MONSTER BOBBY

It's glam rock year 1973… Cadbury's Smash robots are debagging the humans… the drunks are in a works canteen banging trays and chanting "you're not singing any more". Such is Monster Bobby.
Find it: *YouTube*

18 **THE STAIRS** MARY JOANNA

Growling bassist Edgar Summertyme's '90s *Nuggets* revivalists, caught reunited in Liverpool in November. More please!
Find it: *YouTube*

19 **GLENN JONES** FLOWER TURNED INSIDE OUT

Taster from the New Jersey guitarist's sixth LP of sweet, intricate steel-string guitar picking. Audibly recorded in his creaky old house on the banks of Rancocas Creek in Mount Holly, NJ.
Find it: *npr.org*

20 **NAÏVE SET** RABBITS

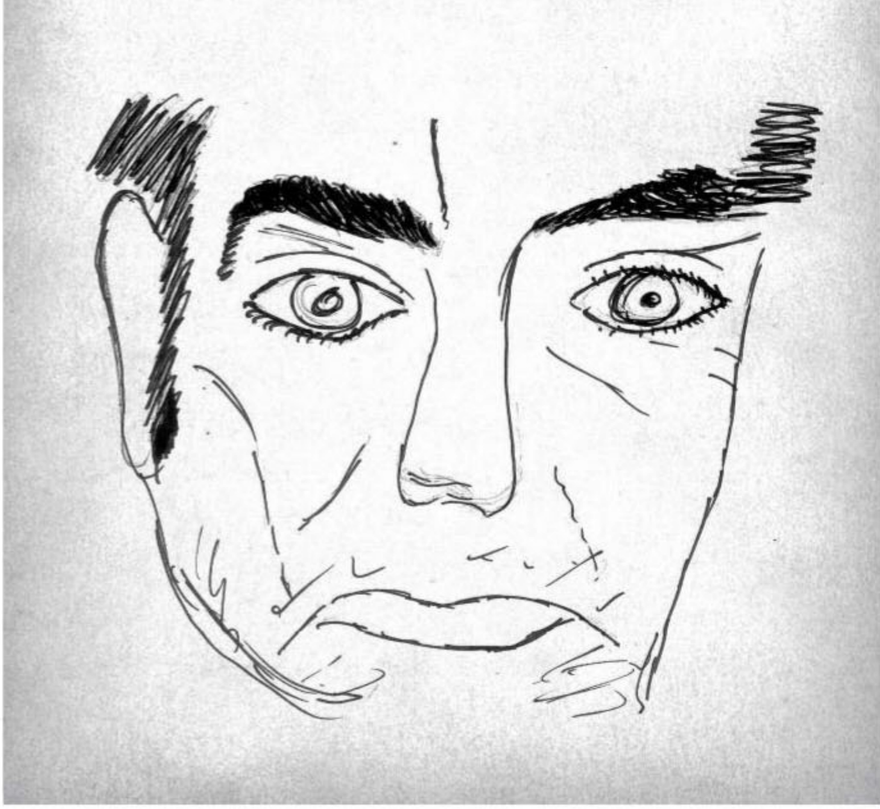
Early R.E.M. vibrations abound in this a transporting track from the Amsterdam-based group's latest LP *Dragons*.
Find it: *YouTube*

Photoshot

SELFPORTRAIT

MARK STEWART

The Pop Group's shadow warrior in his own words and by his own hand…



Bristol maze: Mark Stewart by Mark Stewart. (Those eyes!)

I'd describe myself as… tall.

Music changed me by… making me a mutant. It completely changed me down to the last molecule of my soul. Frontier scientists are discovering the amazing magical effects that music has on the brain and whole body.

When I'm not making music I'm… living life out loud constantly causing chaos. Hopefully there's a method to the madness, but maybe I'm just one of those idiots that never learns his lesson, it's like a constant groundhog day of flipping the script between parallel lives from the frying pan to the (thief) of fire, but I also do a lot of research into what the world was never meant to know; hidden agendas, global manipulation, forbidden history, psychic archaeology and back-engineered alien technology. In the age of information ignorance is a choice.

My biggest vice is… sorry sarge, don't mean to be difficult sir but this has got to be an either/or answer mam. Either the exquisite vicious beauty that was Lilli Marlene – Marlene Dietrich – whom my father saw live at the Café de Paris back in the day and constantly played on a secret agent-looking cassette machine in the car when I was a nipper on the way to Weston-Super-Mare. Or the search for Pecado Original, An Original Sin. There must be one somewhere down that crazy river, where I'm told lie diamonds and dust? But who to trust. But I think on a global level the ultimate vice is the scorched earth policy where they're raping the world's resources and retreating to their castles, leaving our lands barren.

"Lest your children
try to clutch
at their hoarded spoils
when that dying
howl of hunger
blows down your
door"

"I DO A LOT OF RESEARCH INTO WHAT THE WORLD WAS NEVER MEANT TO KNOW."

The last time I was embarrassed was… yesterday, in the supermarket when a three-year-old looked at me and gave me goosebumps. WEIRD KID, and I thought to myself. What the F are we doing for their tomorrow?

My formal qualifications are… two 'O' Levels. I was working part-time jobs and was off running around following bands like Roxy Music, War and then The Clash when I should have been at school. Also missed a lot of exams as The Pop Group were off playing Europe with Patti Smith and Pere Ubu at that time.

The last time I cried was… when I turned on the news, it's emotional violence every bloody day that some unqualified basically ignorant politician (sic) and war profiteers are trying to control our destiny.

Vinyl, CD or MP3… a thick 12-inch of plastic for me please, hopefully one of the brilliant Jamaican pressings cut as deep as hell so the bass is right up in your F-ing face like my hero Prince Far I's *Under Heavy Manners*. At that period they reused and reclaimed everything from the re-melted down vinyl to the coolest sleeves that were reprinted off-kilter, on the inside looking out of cornflake packets, and they smelt like it. Lovely!

My most treasured possession is… THE FUTURE. The flags of our fathers lie tattered and torn whilst bankrupt ideologies litter the dealing room floors.

The best book I've read is… I've got three at this very moment; A Clockwork Jerusalem, the story of Secret Britain's sado-modernism. Meat Science Essays by Michael McClure, for me the most visionary of the Beat writers. A latter-day Lautréamont. The Paradox Of Love by Pascal Bruckner, a classic of the new wave of French philosophy, a must for compulsive writers and diverted readers.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty… my cup truly brimmeth. But *la luta continua*.

My greatest regret is… when the dawn comes like thunder, no time for regrets.

When we die… dreams survive. But I personally would like to be interned in the church of the wind with Lightning Bolt playing at the ceremony. I'm sure we'll all be locked out of heaven anyway unless, of course, we make a deal with God (™). But then again, maybe a wild animus lives on and we become ghost riders in the sky.

I would like to be remembered as… memories are fuel to burn for a brighter future of impossible possibilities.

The Pop Group's For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder? is reissued by Freaks R Us in February.

MONDOMOJO

…last month brought a bold new way to unveil your latest opus: **ANIMAL COLLECTIVE** (below) debuted new LP *Painting With* by playing it over the PA at Baltimore-Washington International Airport during the Thanksgiving rush. It's said the lavs were among the best places to hear it. Next up, **The Stone Roses**' new album in the Manchester Arndale? … in early December, **RINGO STARR** sold off some bric-a-brac through Hollywood auction house Julien's, including Beatles stagewear and instruments, a red telephone box and his UK mono pressing of *The White Album*, numbered 0000001, which went for a tasty $790,000. But who was that anonymous bidder? …further to the How To Buy Ace Records feature in MOJO 266, we're glad to report that *Volume 5* of **DAVE GODIN**'s *Deep Soul Treasures* is being prepared for release, collecting tracks the late music superhead always wanted to license but was unable to. "We're not stopping," says Ace's **Roger Armstrong**. A second **Dan Penn** at Fame collection is also on the way…let the rejoicing begin **WEEN** will reform to play three shows at the 1st Bank Centre in Broomfield, Colorado on February 12-14, 2016. The surprise reunion follows **Gene Ween**'s **Billy Joel** covers project an act of "deep and abiding man-love" of last spring… and in her memoir **CARLY SIMON** (left) finally admits that, yes, at least one verse of You're So Vain is about **Warren Beatty**. But who are the other two about?

Getty Images, Tom Andrew, Chaira Meattelli/Domini Lee

MOJORISING

THE DRINK

Cerebral but sturdy Anglo-Irish indie pop three study the unconscious, prepare to jam.

"I never intend to write complicated songs," says Dearbhla Minogue, singer and guitarist with The Drink, a little mystified but unapologetic about where her band's febrile, dream logic guitar pop comes from.

Moving from Dublin to London in 2011 and living in a warehouse/rehearsal space, Minogue first heard bassist David Stewart and drummer Daniel Fordham playing under her bedroom while practising with their previous band, post-rockers Fighting Kites. "They make the songs I write sound smoother," she says, attributing the extra bars and beats she uses to the Irish and American folk music she grew up listening to and playing. "They're not arbitrary like a lot of math rock stuff, you don't notice the weird time changes," adds Stewart.

Initially self-releasing a series of homemade EPs (collected on last year's *Company*), The Drink's debut album proper *Capital* sees them mixing styles and moods, from the playfully skewed Potter's Grave to the urgent, almost discordant Hair Trigger. Minogue's stream-of-consciousness soloing is also more evident on the baroque, mutant disco of You Won't Come Back At All and the bluesy motorik of No Memory. "When we started, I don't think we ever thought we'd be playing something that people would be dancing to," says Stewart.

The suggestion that The Drink somehow encapsulate a particular moment in the mid-1980s when the likes of Throwing Muses, the Shop Assistants and The Bhundu Boys would all rub shoulders in the music weeklies is met with polite bemusement. "The bands I liked were The Strokes and the Pixies, and people like Bob Dylan," says Minogue, while acknowledging the influence of Kenyan lyricist Ayub Ogada on her playing, and more recently the exploratory improvisations of Rory Gallagher and Jimi Hendrix. "My favourite part of the gig now is when I'm not singing but just playing guitar."

The Drink's obliquely melodic sound is complemented by the disjointed storytelling of Minogue's lyrics, rich with references to sleeping, dreaming and waking, and all delivered in her bolshie choirgirl voice. "I find different mental states really interesting. I'm trying to bypass the intellectual side because the music I like most evokes a set of images that makes you feel a certain way without knowing why necessarily," she says.

With two albums released in just three years, there's a sense of momentum to The Drink. "I'm always thinking about the next thing," says Minogue, who admits to having already written their next album. She's also keen for the material to stretch out and get looser. "I can see us doing more free playing. One of the new songs is based on Click Clack by Captain Beefheart, so there's going to be loads of jamming on that."

Joe Banks

What's yours?: The Drink (from left) Daniel Fordham, Dearbhla Minogue, Dave Stewart. "I'm always thinking of the next thing," says Minogue.

> "I'M TRYING TO BYPASS THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE."

THE DRINK
CAPITAL

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Throwing Muses, Field Music, Lush.
- Dearbhla Minogue is also a member of The Wharves and Shield Your Eyes.
- Recording *Capital*, she only got the right guitar sound hours before recording, "which added a certain energy to it".

KEY TRACKS

- You Won't Come Back At All
- Potter's Grave
- Hair Trigger

ALSORISING

There's something almost tangible about the music made by **IAN WILLIAM CRAIG**. Using his own beatific voice, processed through old tape decks, Craig (left) transforms simple songs into textural landscapes, sites of beauty and decay that blister like unbidden thoughts from some more intimate realm. "It's disconcerting having a body of work that sounds like the inside of one's own head," says Craig of the immersive nature of 2014's *A Turn Of Breath* and 2015's more ambitious *Cradle For The Wanting* (Recital), explaining that he's happiest making this music when his "magic, unapologetic old machines fly off the rails in ways I will never understand. That is wonderful." *AM*

"I learnt to write songs by studying British folk music and singing old English folk songs," explains Anglo-Polish singer songwriter **KATY CARR** (left). "The themes seemed quite contemporary love, death, war, interpersonal conflicts…" These subjects, viewed through the prism of Carr's grand obsession with Poland in the interwar years and after, are brought to vivid life on her singular fifth album, *Polonia*. Its folk-tinged pop constructions include valorous, cinematic salutes to the likes of SOE agent **Krystyna Skarbek**, Bletchley Park cryptographers and legendary north London junk hoarder **Edmund Trebus**. Incidentally, she doesn't feel she's born in the wrong era: "I love living in the 21st century." *IH*

Chris Fleet, Ben Wright Photography

MINDBLOWERS!

STEPHEN O'MALLEY

Sunn 0))) guitar druid digs four-hour minimalism, bass sitar workouts and ragas.

Pedro Rogue; Sunn0)))'s *Kannon* is out Now on Southern Records

La Monte Young
Marian Zazeela
The Tamburas of
Pandit Pran Nath

1 LA MONTE YOUNG & MARIAN ZAZEELA
THE TAMBURAS OF PANDIT PRAN NATH

(Just Dreams, 1999)

"This was recorded in the early '80s by Young and Zazeela as an homage to their guru Pandit Pran Nath, an amazing raga singer they brought to New York and studied with. He was a master of intonation and the tambura, and they decided to make a perfectly intonated performance of the tambura. The story is pretty interesting, but it's just beautiful drone music. No melody, just pure harmonics. I'm fascinated by Indian music, especially Hindustani music. I'd never say our music is raga music but there are things you can be informed by. This is the most obsessive intonation exercise, the same frequency for 74 minutes. There's a low B pitch in there that's almost as low as Sunn 0)))."

2 HARLEY GABER
THE WINDS RISE IN THE NORTH

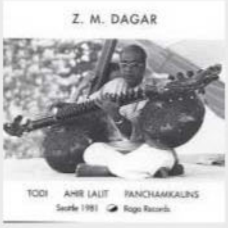
(Titanic, 1976)

"This is a piece for string quartet by an American composer who unfortunately took his own life about five years ago. He also took a break from music in his mid-thirties to become a tennis player. I first encountered this piece in a live setting at the Tectonics Festival in New York. Again, it's a long-form piece, the strings are amplified and in the score Gaber calls for 'amplified strings to the threshold of pain'. This is 1976. Maybe he was friends with Tony Conrad, coming out of that wave, but this is more of a modern composition, new music type thing. Live especially, for so long, that hard, dry timbre, mixed with this really long-form sound, high notes, barely moving around, for about 90 minutes – the tension just doesn't break."

3 ÉLIANE RADIGUE
ADNOS I-III

(Table Of The Elements, 2002)

"She is a French composer who worked with Pierre Schaeffer in *musique concrète* in the late '50s and '60s and then went on to become kind of master of an instrument called the ARP 2500 synthesizer. In the '70s she became increasingly deep into meditation and did a lot of Buddhist prayer music. This is an amazing four-hours-long minimal wave of pure electronics for tape."



4 Z. M. DAGAR
TODI, AHIR LALIT, PANCHAMKAUNS

(Raga, 1998)

"This is a live recording of a druhpad musician named Zia Mohiuddin Dagar. Dagar plays the rudra veena, which is a kind of bass sitar. I was turned on to this record by Chris and Daniel from Ulver. This was recorded in Seattle. He lived there for a long time and taught at the same university I went to but I didn't know about his music at that time. The patience of his playing, playing through the raga itself, is really slow, with this continuous drone. It's so attractive. I'm hoping to release some of his music on my own label and it's going to be very

5 MILES DAVIS
THE COMPLETE ON THE CORNER SESSIONS

(Columbia, 2007)

"As far as Sunn 0))) goes, we love this stuff. Beautiful, beautiful music. These Miles box sets are really interesting as they give you the complete picture of the time, the whole story. Thematically, this record is dealing with race issues, Miles's way of presenting that. There are moments in this period, especially the stuff that was chosen to be on *Get Up With It*, like the tracks Rated X and Red China Blues that are about drugs, basically. That's the way they were titled because the music itself is nasty, you know. And the editing accentuates that. That's one of the criticisms you read of *On The Corner*. Why did it get edited by Teo Macero in a way that focused in on the 'dark' elements? But I think it's a lot more sociological than that. At that time, early '70s, New York was pretty screwed up and I think they wanted to reflect that in the music."

Interview by Andrew Male

Soused?: O'Malley rides the minimal wave.

Keep away from the flames: synchronicity (and Robocop) fan Eleanor Friedberger.

ROCK'N'ROLL CONFIDENTIAL

ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER

The gone-solo Fiery Furnace talks primal screaming, mums and synchronicity.

Amid the pantheon of sister-brother duos from the Midwest, The Fiery Furnaces enjoyed one distinction over The White Stripes, inasmuch as they actually were siblings. Since the Furnaces ceased operations in 2011, it's their distaff component who has blossomed beyond the group format. Eleanor Friedberger's solo debut was 2011's *Last Summer*, followed in 2013 by *Personal Record*, both drawing plaudits for her wry articulation of emotional entanglement amid playful '70s songwriter tapestries. She's in Chicago for Thanksgiving when MOJO calls, but home for Eleanor is now upstate New York, where she recorded her new album *New View*, after 14 years in Brooklyn. "Basically, the same old story – I couldn't afford living in the city," she says. "But it's turned into a total adventure."

What's the resonance of the new album title?

I wanted it to be evocative without banging you over the head with what it's supposed to be. But it has a lot to do with moving and changing, trying to keep a fresh perspective. I like the way it sounds and the way it looks.

What's your new home like?

I'm approximately 100 miles north of Manhattan. On the west side of the Hudson River, in a valley between the Catskills and a smaller mountain range with a really good name: the Shawangunks. 'The Gunks' for short. I ended up buying with a good friend. It's a crazy place that has a bunch of different buildings, including an 8,000-square foot factory building that we're slowly trying to renovate. So it's been fun. And I'm still close enough to the city.

After collaborating with English author Wesley Stace on *Personal Record*, you're in sole command of songwriting on *New View*. Are you mainly the participant or observer in these songs?

I'm both. For instance, Cathy With The Curly Hair was a conversation, something I said to someone. Cathy is a real person… whom I haven't met.

How about He Didn't Mention His Mother?

I had met someone recently, and was thinking about our interactions. I know this sounds like I'm a crazy psycho or something (*laughs*), but I was writing down a list of things about this person that stuck out. And one was: he didn't mention his mother. Which was neither bad or good, it was just something I noticed. Because most people do. In fact, a lot of people I meet blame a lot of things on their mother.

So, should he have mentioned his mother?

EL'S BELLES

La Friedberger's fave five

1 **Destroyer** *The River* (FROM *POISON SEASON*, DEAD OCEANS, 2015)

2 **Deerhunter** *Snakeskin* (FROM *FADING FRONTIER*, 4AD, 2015)

3 **Joanna Newsom** *Leaving The City* (FROM *DIVERS*, DRAG CITY, 2015)

4 **Field Music** *The Noisy Days Are Over* (MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES TRACK, 2015)

5 **Cassandra Jenkins** *Wild World* (BANDCAMP TRACK, 2015)

Well, it turns out his mother's dead.

You write about tense personal situations in a calm, measured way. Is that an aesthetic choice, or reflective of your character?

I hope it's the latter!

You don't really do primal screaming…

No. And I would like to try at some point. The closest I get on this album was I wanted to sing higher in my register than I normally do, and lower. I know I'm accused of having a one-range sort of voice. And I'm fine with that! I want to sound… calm. While relaying tiny details.

How's your brother Matt?

He's good. He's back in New York now after living abroad.

Is solo life better than Fiery Furnaces life?

For me it is. Without saying anything bad about the other life. It's something I'm enjoying more and more, learning more and more.

So is The Fiery Furnaces something you can imagine going back to?

Oh sure. It's hard to imagine not.

You've said you can't imagine still playing guitar on-stage at 50.

Yeah, well… I'm closing in on 40, so I'm gonna have to scratch that from the record. I'm getting better at playing guitar, so maybe by the time I'm 50 I'll actually be good!

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

Do you know an actor named Peter Weller? He played Robocop. Well, I met him recently, in Pittsburgh. We had a good chat. Fast forward a few months: I was in a famous bar in New York City called Bemelmans, in the Carlyle Hotel. In walks this older couple, both have long white hair and they end up sitting next to us. My friend says to them, 'Eleanor's a musician – [to the guy] do you play in a group?' He says, 'Oh yeah, I play in a group… called the Eagles.' It's Timothy B Schmit. So we had a nice chat. Anyway, I tell my bandmates this story, and one says 'Wow!' and plays me this massive hit that Timothy B Schmit wrote, called *I Can't Tell You Why*, which I haven't heard in a long time. All these memories come back to me. The song was in a movie about divorce, *Shoot The Moon*, which made a big impression on me as a kid. Albert Finney leaves Diane Keaton for a younger woman and she's making a play for the handyman who I remember thinking was really cute. So I look it up to see who played this guy I had a crush on – and it was Peter Weller! Just one of those moments when everything in your life clicked in this weird way you can't explain.

Keith Cameron

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

DANNY THOMPSON

The bass magus recalls Sonny Terry's Hootin' Blues.

I was 11 or 12, in the early '50s. We're talking the time of George Formby and Vera Lynn and Flanagan & Allen and all that. Twee popular music, to cheer up the nation. It was post-war, we needed a good old laugh. Without going into it, I was having a terrible time. It was not a great childhood.

Our radio was just a little box thing, a crystal set. You had to sit with your ear right against the speaker. But of course for a young boy it was a massive adventure. It saved you from the dreadful world that was going on… there was a programme Alan Lomax was doing on the BBC, and I was growing up listening to all these great singers, Gary Davis, Big Bill Broonzy, Blind Blake, and also the interviews in penitentiaries.

When they played this song, I just smiled. I'd never heard anything like it. Just the sound of it, with him hooping and whooping, it was just magical. And on the BBC, too – maybe they thought it was a quirky, novelty record. So I went and bought it from Arding & Hobbs in Clapham Junction, a department store where'd I'd bought my Dinky toys. I was doing a paper round and it was the first, real serious record I'd ever bought. When I got it, I played and played it on this wind-up record player, picturing what life was like on that train. It just haunted me, and excited me, and fired me up. And the fact that he was blind! You'd go and see your mates and tell them… there was a rubber stop on the end of a chair, which I pulled off and cut it to make myself a harmonica, and I became that bloke, haha! Pretending I was playing along with it.

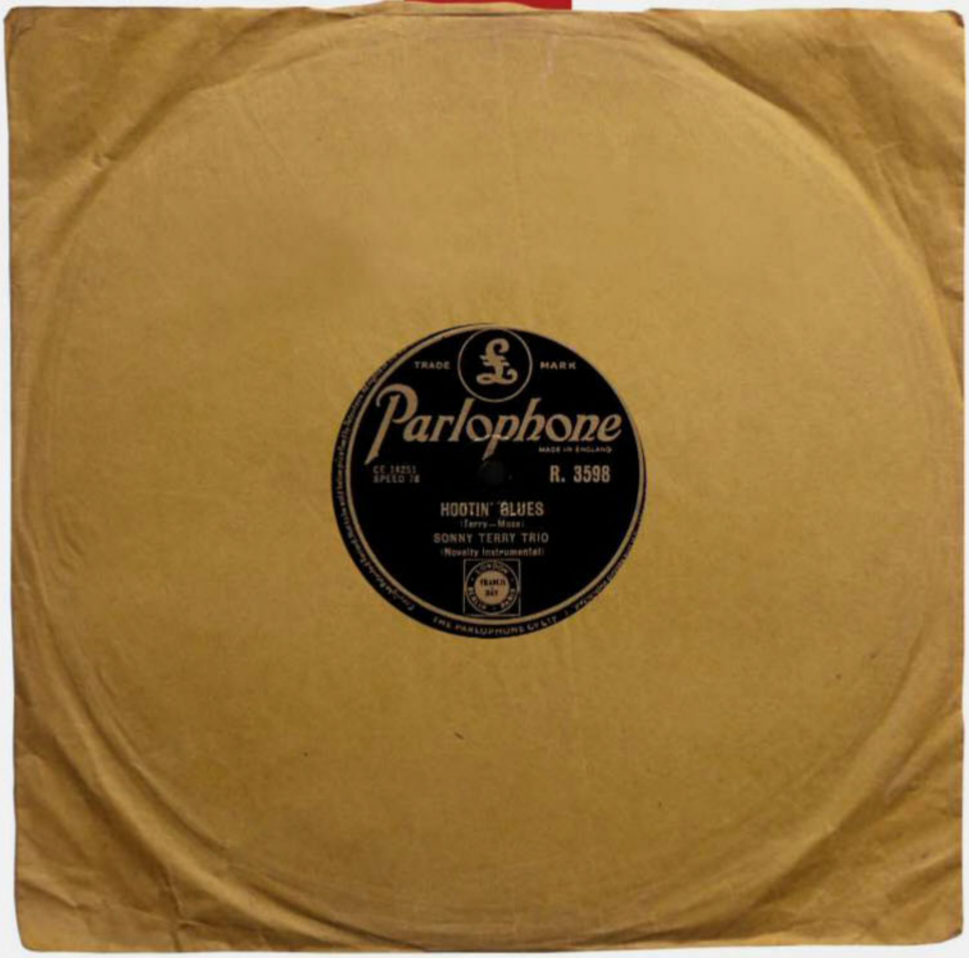
It really made an enormous impact on me, so much so that I hooked up with a mate of mine and we started a little skiffle group. I was learning guitar then, and then I made myself a tea chest [bass]. It was the start of my journey. Years later, I'm backstage and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee are there and I start jamming with them! For me, I think, "Was it meant to be, from that very first listen?" I don't want to go and live on top of a mountain, I'm pretty feet on the ground. But I think there's a lot of spiritual things happen to us. Fate, if you want to call it that. But I don't get precious about all that.

Ian Harrison

Ryley Walker & Danny Thompson tour the UK from February 17.

Upright man: life's a hoot with Danny Thompson (below); (bottom) Sonny's 78.

"IT HAUNTED ME, AND EXCITED ME, AND FIRED ME UP… I BECAME THAT BLOKE."



LIFERAFT
STATION
1
HUDSON BAY
LABRADOR
CANADA
James Bay
Bermuda

MOJO EYEWITNESS

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN'S LEY LINES TOUR, 1983

On the back of their mighty *Porcupine* album, that June the Bunnymen set off on obliquely ordered, delphic dates in New York, Iceland and the Outer Hebrides, concluding at the Royal Albert Hall. The tour trajectory was meant to relate to the path of an interstellar ley line… but what was really afoot?

PART 1 "IT COULD'VE BEEN VENEZUELA"

Bunnymen frontman Ian McCulloch on ley line "bollocks", drunken Vikings and counting holes in Blackburn, Lancashire.

"The idea was to do a tour along the route of some ley line, which was some bollocks that Bill Drummond dreamt up. Drummond had two ideas: one was to manage the greatest band in the world, badly, and the second was to talk shite about ley lines. He has this thing that all the Bunnymen ideas were his, which is bollocks. It was our idea to play some little towns off the beaten track, he just happened to know some places in Scotland he'd been to as a kid. They could have been in Venezuela for all I cared. The whole point of the exercise was to end up at the Albert Hall, which was brilliant, because no rock band had played there for 10 years. The last one had been Mott The Hoople in the early '70s, a band I was into, so that connected.

The single around that time was Never Stop. We heard that Max Hole at Warners – Arse Hole, I used to call him – didn't want to put it out. He didn't think it was 'good enough' to put out. So I told Bill Drummond to phone him. He was all right, but he shouldn't have been working at a record company; he should have been, I dunno, a posh milkman. So it did come out, about two weeks later. So all this stuff was happening.

The tour started in New York at the Roseland Ballroom [June 28], which I didn't enjoy much because the on-stage sound wasn't good. Then we did Boston, and went back to New York to play a secret show at the Peppermint Lounge. We went on at 2am, then went straight to the airport to fly to Reykjavik. It was cool playing Iceland, we probably lost money doing it, but no one else played there. The last person of any note to visit had probably been Arne Saknussemm [fictional discoverer of the Hollow Earth]. We played to a hall full of pissed-up Vikings, it was great.

The boat trip over to Skye… I dunno, it's all a blur. We played at a village hall in Skye [the Gathering Hall], and when we arrived all the Bunnymen fans were spread out on the green. That was cool. We went to a chippy after the gig, which you should never do. The gig at Stornoway on Lewis? Hmmm (*thinks*). I remember twatting someone, a local, in the hotel afterwards, which was brought up in court some years later.

After that, it was all about getting down to London. We did a gig at the St George's Hall in Blackburn. Now we knew how many holes it took to fill the Albert Hall, so that was useful. Actually, that was one of Drummond's few good ideas, playing there because of that song. Before we did the show we went in the pub round the corner to watch Top Of The Pops, as we'd pre-recorded Never Stop for it. The single had come out by then, with the great cover with the cherry blossoms and the Albert Hall in the background.

The two Albert Hall shows were incredible. Our promoter had been trying to get us on there for ages, with a bit of help from Bill Drummond. Those gigs have to be in the Top 10, or even in the Top 2, gigs the Bunnymen ever played. The first show had to be stopped for 20 minutes while the crash barrier was mended. All the fans rushed to the front of the stage, and [the stewards] weren't used to dealing with rock band audiences. When we came back on, I was asked to tell the crowd to stay in their seats, but I told them, 'Look, there's a thousand of you and seven of them, so work that one out for yourself.' We had quad sound, which the sound engineer had never used before, so it was brilliant.

I remember the feeling before the gigs, the buzz of performing in such a wonderful place. Although we got bigger later, I think the two Albert Hall shows represented the extent of our true fan base. That was the essence of it all. Whenever we play there now, I think of it as ours, as somehow belonging to us."

ATLANTIC TOUR, 1983
① New York
② Reykjavik
③ Roskilde
④ Isle Of Skye
⑤ Isle Of Lewis
⑥ Inverness
⑦ Glasgow
⑧ Nottingham
⑨ Blackburn
⑩ Liverpool
⑪ London
"LAY DOWN THY RAINCOAT AND GROOVE"
Never Stop / Echo & The Bunnymen

The band ley'd on: (main, from top) Les Pattinson, Will Sergeant and Ian McCulloch en route to Lewis, July 5, 1983; (above, clockwise from top) Ley Line tour itinerary; Never Stop and *Porcupine*; Bill Drummond, manager; scenes from the Bunnymen's filmed gig at the Royal Albert Hall, July 18, 1983.

"THE ALBERT HALL SHOWS... THAT WAS THE ESSENCE OF IT ALL."

Kevin Cummins/Getty Images, Pennie Smith, Alamy, Brian Griffin

TURN OVER! BUNNYGUITAR WILL SERGEANT ON PUNKS, SKINS AND HIPPIES IN THE FAR NORTH.

PART 2 "ALL VERY WICKER MAN"

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN'S LEY LINES TOUR, 1983

Guitarist Will Sergeant on mystical standing stones, locals in bobble hats and the maddest of trips.

"Bill Drummond had this idea that an ancient ley line ran down the middle of Mathew Street in Liverpool, so this idea came about of playing some 'mystical'-type places. He knew the Isle Of Skye and had been to Iceland on a boat. I'd never really been anywhere before I joined the band, only to Wales for three days.

There were other gigs on that tour but what stands out is the Scottish bit. The whole thing was very Wicker Man. Driving through places in the back of beyond, everybody would stop and look at us, as if they'd never seen a Transit van before. Les [Pattinson, bassist] made it worse by putting the hazard lights on and beeping at all these people in tea-cosy bobble hats that were staring at us. Most of the fans that came were from Scotland. They'd follow us, and take the same ferry as us, wearing all the camouflage gear we'd worn the year before. It felt like an invading army and that we were all in this thing together.

The first stop was the Gathering Hall, at Portree on the Isle Of Skye. We brought a small PA in the van, and the lighting was done with Anglepoise lamps. The local audience was one punk, one skin, one hippy, one greaser – there was one of every different youth cult movement, all doing different dances down the front! It was dead funny.

On the Isle Of Lewis [where the band played in the reception room at Stornoway's Cabarfeidh Hotel], me and Bill, with a journalist in tow, went up to the Callanish Stones at about three or four o'clock in the morning. This local lad took us in his car, and we stood there looking at the stones in the headlights. They were dead warm, as if they were connected to the centre of the Earth, and had a certain vibration.

Drummond lay down in the pit in the middle, where they used to do sacrifices or whatever they did.

The Iceland show was weird, too. We'd been there before, for the cover shoot for *Porcupine* [their third LP, released in February 1983]. When we went back to play it was summer and it never got dark. The audience were all mad and off their heads. This one kid got up on the stage and the police piled on top of him. He convinced them he'd calmed down, so they let him go and he grabbed a fire extinguisher and started lashing out of at everybody. He was on some mad trip, with the strength of 10 men.

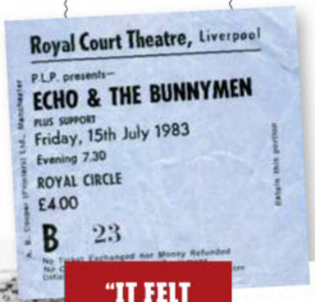
Bill Drummond didn't shy away from the big targets, and it took a lot of negotiating to book the Albert Hall. It was great – was it a career highlight? I dunno. When we started out, I thought we'd just look cool in Eric's for a few weeks. I can't remember the tour we did two years ago, but those dates in Scotland I'll remember forever."

Pat Gilbert

The Bunnymen play dates in the Netherlands in January 2016. Ian McCulloch plays UK dates in February and March.

"IT FELT LIKE AN INVADING ARMY."

Porcupineing for the fjords: Echo & The Bunnymen in summer '83 (from left) Ian McCulloch, Will Sergeant, Pete De Freitas, Les Pattinson play in Brian's diner, Stanley Street, Liverpool; (below) a home-coming ticket: (bottom) McCulloch on the Isle Of Lewis.



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Evening 7.30
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£4.00
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Pennie Smith, Kevin Cummins/Getty Images

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PAUL FONFARA
Cedar Cultural Center

ON THE ROAD

MIDWEST SIDE STORY

Beloved entertainers Squeeze hit Minneapolis and talk breaking up, making up, Danny Baker and how to become a myth.

It's a grey pre-Thanksgiving afternoon in Minneapolis and a pair of south London pop pilgrims are looking over the city's sights. Squeeze's Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook bear the chill atop their downtown hotel, posing for photos against a landmark Art Deco skyscraper. The duo are in the midst of their two-man, At Odds Couple tour of America, setting up for a couple sold-out shows in town.

The visit to the Midwest reminds Difford of a previous trip in 1978, which found them supporting The Tubes and hard rockers April Wine.

"The curtain went up and everyone was expecting April Wine," says Difford. "There was a lot of disappointment – people were throwing things at us. I got hit in the head by a bottle. We had to abandon ship after about four songs."

It's a more affable audience that greets the pair at the cosy, 500-capacity Cedar Cultural Center. Beforehand, a big screen plays a video depicting Squeeze's book of Genesis: the story of how a teenaged Difford stole 50p from his mum's purse to put an ad in a newsagent's shop window, which Tilbrook would answer.

The stage set's done up like a '60s-era bedroom, and Difford and Tilbrook open the show dressed in pyjamas, lying in their respective bunks. As an old Oscar Peterson record blares, they rouse and sit at a breakfast table pouring tea for one another. "It's designed to create a whole mood, before we even do anything," says Tilbrook of this cheeky bit of theatre.

When they grab acoustic guitars and serve up tumbling harmonies on Take Me I'm Yours, it's the start of two sets and two hours of Squeeze hits, rarities, costume changes, solo turns, audience interactions and jokes aplenty. "Here's a song that paid for my first divorce," grins Difford, introducing Cool For Cats. He's soon off, ceding the stage to Tilbrook, who cracks, "Oh no, we've split up already."

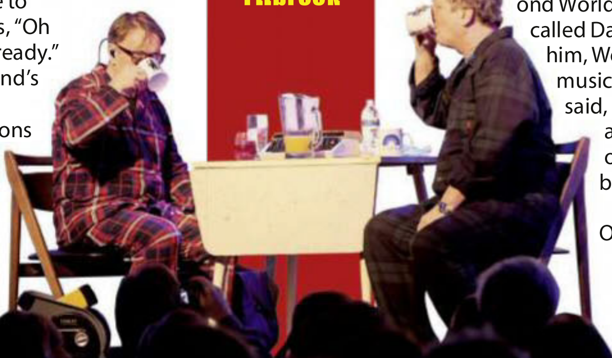
A sense of the band's history – with its breakups, reformations and the sometimes fractious bond between its two principals – is inescapable. "Part of our relationship is the myth of us," says Tilbrook. "Whatever the reality of it is, it exists beyond either of our control. In a way, that's what the show is visually saying: we are one of those duos. No matter what we do, we're always going to be in each other's pockets."

"It's interesting that you say 'myth' – it is kind of mythical," offers Difford. "When you read about Rodgers & Hart or Lennon & McCartney, those kinds of relationships, from the outside everyone sees them differently. But the actual root of it all is two people that met when they were young and started writing songs and found something in each other. That doesn't change."

Slotted in between their familiar numbers are a handful of songs off *Cradle To The Grave* – the first album of new Squeeze material in 17 years. Released in October, the project was inspired by Danny Baker's 2012 memoir Going To Sea In A Sieve. "I was ill in bed, got Danny's book, and read it one afternoon," says Tilbrook. "We had identical backgrounds, and shared that post-Second World War austerity. I called Danny up and told him, We should make a musical out of this. He said, 'Actually, we're already working on a TV show, but come along.'" Providing October's Peter

Twin City rockers: Glenn Tilbrook (seated) and Chris Difford with the Art Deco Foshay Tower in the background, Minneapolis, November 25, 2015; (below) drinking tea on-stage at the Cedar Cultural Center.

> **"WE'VE DEALT WITH MOST OF OUR ISSUES… AND SWEPT THE REST UNDER THE CARPET."**
> **Glenn Tilbrook**



Tony Nelson (tonynelsonphoto.com) (11)

CHRIS DIFFORD & GLENN TILBROOK
THE NEW ALBUM AVAILABLE HERE TONIGHT!
THE ODD COUPLE AT ODDS LIVE!

Take Me
Cats
Coffee
Nirvana
Electric
Some Fantastic
Beautiful game
(Man in Golden Cape)
Slap
Chris
Glenn joins in
Junction

Glenn
Annie
Cradle
Only 15
Happy Days
(Man in Golden Cape)
Muscles
Is That Love
Tempted

Goodbye

3rd Fret Strut
(Beautiful Game)

Remark
Settings

In Odds' name: (clockwise from top left) the performance commences; merch alert; setlist; the artistes on-stage; applauding the crowd; Difford squeezes his lemon backstage; outside the venue.

Kay-led sitcom Happy Days with its title and theme song – as well as making cameo appearances – Difford and Tilbrook spent early 2015 recording a loose-knit concept album based around the series. The project, it seemed, finally broke the ice between them, and their once strict division of labour – Difford penning lyrics and Tilbrook doing music – melted away.

"Now there's more of a debate and more of a partnership involved in it," says Difford. "We've both got a lot more to bring to the table than we did in the old days." The album has proven a major success, with *Cradle To The Grave* marking the highest charting debut of Squeeze's career, with Radio 2 playlisting the single Happy Days.

At the Cedar, their performance is broken up by a Q&A session with the crowd. "I'm wondering if either of you, or both of you, think I'm cute," asks one besotted female fan. A sweaty fellow in the back wants to know why they broke up in the first place. "We had issues to deal with – we've dealt with most of them… and swept the rest under the carpet," offers Tilbrook to laughter. When he observes, "Chris has the warmest heart of anyone I know," the audience practically coos its approval.

Each night ends with a post-show meet-and-greet with fans. A father brings his young daughters to pose for pictures with the duo, while a middle-aged woman (wearing a vintage "I Quite Like Squeeze" T-shirt) introduces them to her octogenarian father.

"They'll talk about how they saw us in 1978, or 1984 or 1995, whenever it was they got switched on. And they'll mention a couple of obscure songs they love," says Difford. "It's really a rewarding relationship. A lot of groups would just play the gig and not experience that connection."

With their fortunes on the rise on both sides of the Atlantic, there are plans to play the summer festival circuit in the UK and do a full band tour of the US in 2016 – as well as talk of a new LP. "I'd like to get started soon on writing," says Tilbrook. "There's so much we've learned and so much we can do to make the next record better." "Oh yes," grins Difford. "There's all sorts to be talked about when we get home!"

Bob Mehr

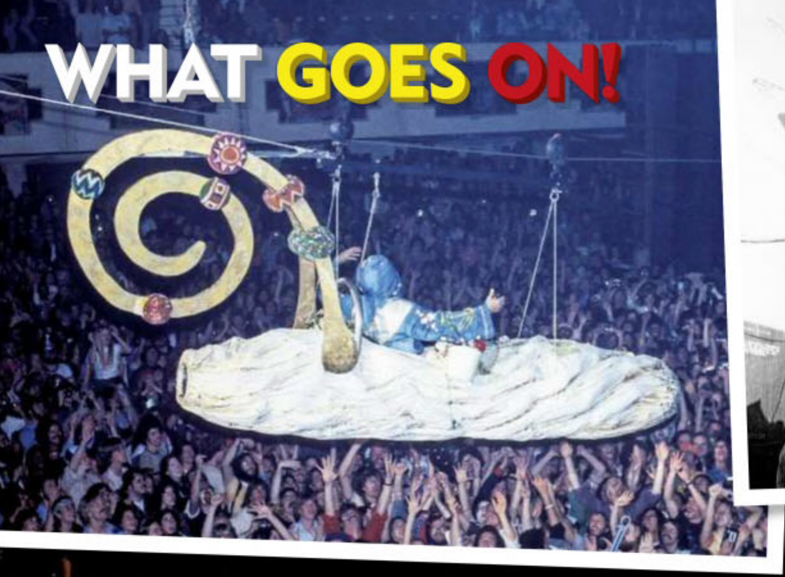
NETWORKSOUTHEAST

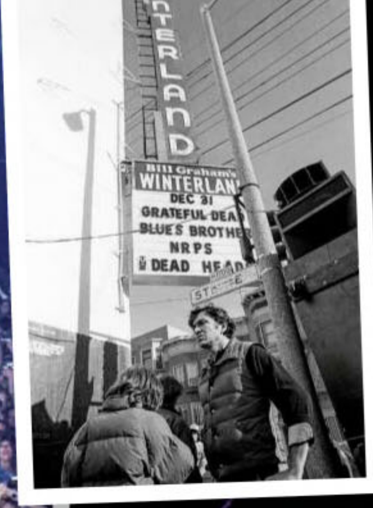
Chris and Glenn's rocking protégés.

Difford and Tilbrook have also been busy mentoring a new generation of musicians. In Tilbrook's case it's a family affair. His two sons, Ted and Louis, are members of Brisbane indie poppers Millions (below), with Louis (right) and Ted (left). Tilbrook produced their 2014 album, *Max Relax*. "I love what they've got going," says Tilbrook. "Though, being a dad and a producer, it can be a bit tough they're going to do it on their own now."

Difford, meanwhile, continues to work with Irish retro-rockers The Strypes. "I'm not really a producer, but I know how to press play and record at the same time," says Difford. "I was in awe of them." He notes The Strypes currently prepping their third record are determined to break in the US. "All the stories I've told them about how Squeeze survived in America in the early days, they're itching to do the same thing to come over and get in a minibus and just tour."

The nascent spark in young groups stirs a familiar feeling, they say. "That's the beauty of the whole thing the chemistry of a good rock'n'roll band has never changed," says Difford. "And I don't think it ever will."

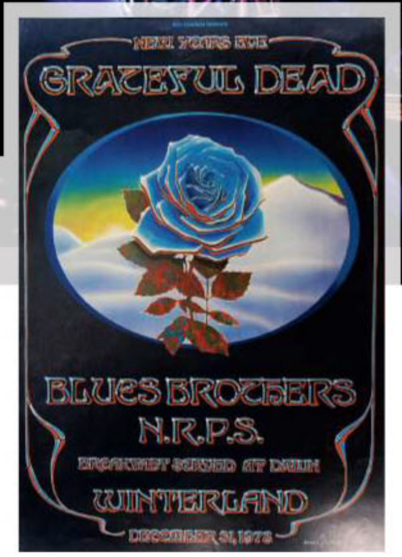




TIMEMACHINE

JANUARY 1979 ...WINTERLAND FINALLY CLOSES

Ballroom blitz: (clockwise from top left) Bill Graham rides a giant joint at midnight; Bill outside, days before; Blues Brother John Belushi; Grateful Dead on-stage, with balloons; gig poster; (below) Bill

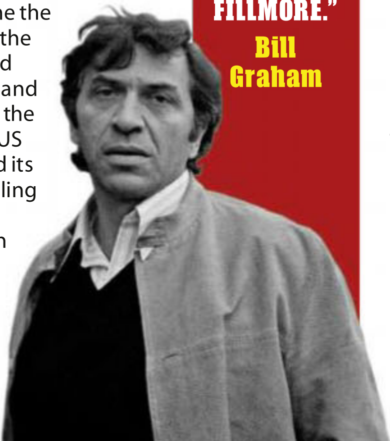


JANUARY 1 As Dan Aykroyd completed the obligatory countdown and the midnight chimes rang out for the New Year, Bill Graham swung above the crowd at San Francisco's Winterland, riding a giant marijuana joint and decked out as Father Time. A multi-coloured shower of balloons descended from the ceiling onto 5,400 fans below, as the Grateful Dead welcomed the arrival of 1979 with a version of Sugar Magnolia.

It was a joyous time, yet equally sad. For the party not only celebrated the possibilities of a new year, but also marked the closure of Winterland, a revered rock venue where, for 12 years, promoter Graham had presented many of the most esteemed names in the rock firmament.

But before the doors slammed shut for the last time, Graham ordered the house lights to be switched full on as he and his helpers served champagne, ham and eggs to the crowd. Eventually, the various band members hugged one another and announced their farewell to Winterland with the traditional, gospel-infused, And We Bid You Goodnight. "It was a great house," Bill Graham sighed wistfully, "as good to me if not better than the original Fillmore."

Located on the corner of Post Street and Steiner Street, Winterland opened as a skating rink in 1928. The first bill Graham presented at the ballroom featured Jefferson Airplane and The Paul Butterfield Blues Band in September 1968, and he began promoting there more regularly after the closure of the Fillmore West in 1971. It soon became the Grateful Dead's base, the venue where The Band filmed The Last Waltz and the Sex Pistols played the final gig of their 1978 US tour. Jimi Hendrix trod its boards, as did The Rolling Stones, Cream, Elvis Costello, Led Zeppelin and a whole Valhalla's-worth of rock legends.



> "IT WAS A GREAT HOUSE, AS GOOD TO ME IF NOT BETTER, THAN THE ORIGINAL FILLMORE."
> **Bill Graham**

But, by the time of that final New Year's gig, the place had fallen into disrepair. Faced with a refurbishment bill estimated at more than $350,000, Bill Graham, in the wake of 556 shows at Winterland, opted to shut up shop.

Backstage that January morning, between sets, the Dead's rhythm guitarist, Bob Weir, expressed his feelings. "I was beginning to get a feeling for the place. I used to hate it. It was an acoustical snake pit. There have got to be better places somewhere." He advised listeners to the radio and TV broadcasts that they should badger Graham into creating a superior replacement: "Bill should provide a better place for rock'n'roll."

In the interim, though, Graham had to put the Winterland to rest. When planning that final date he kept the Grateful Dead uppermost in his mind.

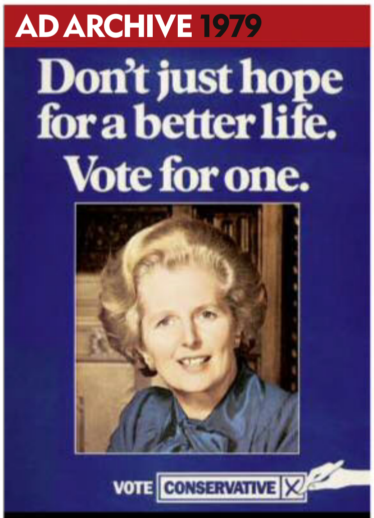
The crumbling space was the band's home-from-home – they'd played countless gigs and filmed their Grateful Dead Movie there – so for a grand farewell gesture, he wrote to the Dead and asked, Would they rehearse for the show, and would they include all the Deadheads' favourites? They agreed, and on the night a sign on the side of hall read: "They're not the best at what they do – they are the only ones who do what they do."

Realising the night would prove a massive crowd-puller, Graham devised an elaborate lottery system to ensure a fair distribution of tickets. The January 13 edition of Billboard reported, "The hall was filled to capacity with patrons who paid $30 a ticket for the privilege… fans who had arrived from as far away as Boston and Hawaii began lining up outside Winterland four days before the show. Graham transformed the interior as totally as he had for The Last Waltz, the 1976 farewell by The Band. The balconies were ringed with 34 pictorial panels, which told the history of Winterland. The panels – 40 by 60-inch colour – were airbrushed blowups of performers such as Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Led Zeppelin, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane and The Rolling Stones, arranged in chronological order starting with the poster done for the first Winterland show and ending with a photo of Graham on a motorcycle ushering in the New Year's one year ago."

Sparked by an opening performance by New Riders Of The Purple Sage and The Blues Brothers, whose stellar band included Steve Cropper, Duck Dunn, Tom Scott and Matt Murphy, that final show edged ever forward until the all-important countdown and the three-full-sets performance by the Dead. It seemed a fitting final tribute to one of rock's great homes. A few years later, the building was torn down and replaced by condominiums and a Burger King.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1979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ALSO THIS MONTH

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SID IN DOCK

2 The trial of **Sid Vicious** (above) for the October 1978 murder of girlfriend **Nancy Spungen**, begins in New York City.

FAREWELL, ANGRY MAN

4 In Mexico, bass-playing jazz giant **Charles Mingus** dies of a heart attack, aged 56. His ashes are to be scattered in the Ganges according to his wishes.

CARTER GOES

8 **Sara Carter**, sole remaining original member of country music's legendary Carter Family, dies at her home in Lodi, California, aged 81.

VOICES UTD

9 The Gift Of Song benefit concert is held at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, featuring the **Bee Gees**, **Olivia Newton-John**, **Rod Stewart**, **Abba**, **Donna Summer**, **John Denver** and more.

LYNYRD BACK

12 Ten thousand fans attend **Charlie Daniels Band**'s fifth homecoming bash at Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. **Lynyrd Skynyrd** play their first gig since the plane crash that killed **Ronnie Van Zant** and **Steve Gaines**.

DONNY DIES

13 Soul singer **Donny Hathaway** dies after jumping from the fifteenth floor of a New York City hotel.

SPLIT, SINGLE

16 **Cher** and **Greg Allman**'s marriage ends as their divorce is finalised. They have one child, Elijah Blue Allman, born in 1976.

MICK NICKED

23 A Los Angeles court orders **Mick Jagger** to pay to **Marsha Hunt** $1,500 a week child support for their daughter **Karis**.

BLUE MONDAY

29 In San Diego, teen **Brenda Spencer** kills two in a school gun-spree. Asked why she did it, she says: "I don't like Mondays." **Boomtown Rats** turn the grisly tale into a UK Number 1 hit of the same name in July.

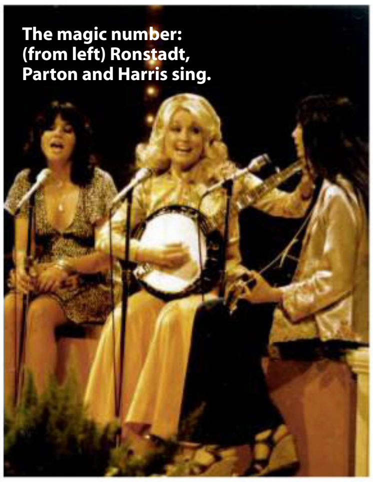
MARVIN GAYE
Here, My Dear

Doing the split: Marvin channels his pain into *Here, My Dear* (inset).

MARVIN'S DIVORCE SETTLEMENT ALBUM

JANUARY 20 Marvin Gaye's *Here, My Dear* double album, released just prior to Christmas, debuts in the US Top 40. The LP gets its title from the fact that proceeds from it go to Anna Gordy, Gaye's ex-wife and the daughter of Motown founder Berry Gordy. Bankrupted by the divorce, Marvin says he bears his former wife no ill will. "Though there is some bitterness on the album, there are some respectful cuts that tell of a wonderful love," he explains. Anna initially threatens an invasion of privacy lawsuit.

The magic number: (from left) Ronstadt, Parton and Harris sing.



TRIO CONVENE

JANUARY 17 After spending time together in what they term "a week-long slumber party", Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris announce that they are to record an album together. Their collaboration will, however, not appear until March 1987. Entitled *Trio*, it includes songs written by Linda Thompson, Kate McGarrigle and Phil Spector: it sells in platinum quantities and wins a Grammy. Another album, *Trio II*, follows in 1999.

TOP TEN

US SINGLES JANUARY 20

1	**LE FREAK**	CHIC	ATLANTIC
2	**TOO MUCH HEAVEN**	BEE GEES	RSO
3	**MY LIFE**	BILLY JOEL	COLUMBIA
4	**Y.M.C.A.**	VILLAGE PEOPLE	CASABLANCA
5	**HOLD THE LINE**	TOTO	COLUMBIA
6	**YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS**	BARBRA STREISAND & NEIL DIAMOND	COLUMBIA
7	**OOH BABY BABY**	LINDA RONSTADT	ASYLUM
8	**A LITTLE MORE LOVE**	OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN	MCA
9	**PROMISES**	ERIC CLAPTON	RSO
10	**DO YA THINK I'M SEXY?**	ROD STEWART	WARNER

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LONG, LONG JOURNEY

1938-2015 Allen Toussaint, titan of New Orleans music, left us on November 9. Geoff Brown says farewell.

It was July 23, 2009, and I was talking to Allen Toussaint about his recent performance at London's Jazz Café, and, indeed, about his life's work up to the recent album *The Bright Mississippi*. After a while we reached the conundrum, "How do you produce a producer?" Referring to *Motion*, his 1978 album with Jerry Wexler, he said, "whenever you're with Jerry Wexler there's a whole museum and monument and university that comes along with it, 'cos you're with the same guy who produced Ray Charles, Solomon Burke, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and all those greats. He had the deepest musician's soul, it's just that he didn't play it."

Toussaint, who died after suffering a fatal heart attack just hours after playing a show at the Teatro Lara theatre in Madrid, might as well have been describing himself. Except that he *could* play it as well. A gifted pianist and phenomenally productive songwriter, Toussaint blossomed into a sympathetic, perceptive producer, ran a studio, spotted talent, recorded under his own name after years of success as a session musician, and was eventually forced out of his New Orleans hearth and home in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (2005) to reveal himself as a consummate performer, more at ease with club and concert audiences than he'd ever imagined. Indeed, a highlight of his intimate July 19 set at the Jazz Café featured an Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky (From Now On) that quoted from Roll Out The Barrel, Chattanooga Choo Choo, Tipitina, Grieg's Piano Concerto, among other pieces. "I'm just sort of rambling through a tranche of treasures," he said. And my, what treasures.

Allen Toussaint's ramble started on January 14, 1938, in Gert Town, New Orleans, born into a music-loving family where he absorbed gospel in church, boogie-woogie piano, even hillbilly music from the radio, plus jazz and classical. "I recall my mother buying a record player and they gave her albums along with it, things like Grieg's Piano Concerto and another one was a Benny Goodman big band type thing." But piano really gripped him. Toussaint had had some 'proper' tuition, he said, but the boogie-woogie bug had bit too deep – Albert Ammons, Pinetop Smith, he particularly loved Professor Longhair, "and there was a man who came into my life when I was 12, to 14, and his name was Ernest Penn. [A New Orleans multi-instrumentalist] he put [stride piano technique] tenths in my left hand and 'butterflies' in my right." Around that time Toussaint began playing in The Flamingoes and in a few years attracted the attentions of Fats Domino's bandleader Dave Bartholomew, and A&R man Danny Kessler.

"I played a session of his and he kept going out and saying, 'Turn the piano up behind the singer.' When the session was over he said he'd like to do an album on me, could I get some material together." Returning with a batch of songs, some just titled Number One, Number Two, Number Three, he quickly recorded 1958's *The Wild Sounds Of New Orleans By Tousan*, Kessler naming untitled songs after racehorses like Bono, Tim Tam and Nashua. "I'd never heard of them, but he was a betting man and they tell me he stayed broke all his life (*laughs*)."

By 1960 he was working for Joe Banashak's Minit label and here his writing and production careers blossomed. Cutting his teeth as a producer on saxophonist Lee Allen's 1957 rockin' instrumental Walking With Mr Lee, a stream of R&B and soul hits now poured forth from Toussaint's pen, piano and productions – as a producer, Jesse Hill's Ooh Poo Pah Doo and The Showmen's It Will Stand; as writer/producer, Benny Spellman's Fortune Teller, Chris Kenner's I Like It Like That, Ernie K-Doe's A Certain Girl and Mother-In-Law, and Irma Thomas's Ruler Of My Heart, famously usurped by Otis Redding as Pain In My Heart, which had resulted in a lawsuit by Banashak, who owned the publishing company as well as Minit.

"I on my own would not even have bothered," Toussaint told me, "because I was very glad Otis had heard a song of mine and dealt with it in such a fashion. It didn't dawn on me to go after it or seek justification. I was just elated to be recognised by him."

Of those songs, Mother-In-Law has arguably been the most durable. "Four songs came to me that day, in that 24-hour period, yes. It was not considered the highest ranking of them. [K-Doe] had a tendency to want to scream and holler like Archie Brownlee of The Five Blind Boys [Of Mississippi] and he wanted to shout and hoot and holler on it. So when he first tried it and began to do that I just balled it up and threw it away and was going on to the next song. One of the back-up singers, Willie Hopper, pulled it out of the trash and said, 'No, Ernie K-Doe, try and listen to what he's saying and don't holler and scream, just sing it like he says 'cos it's a good song." It was a Number 1 US pop hit.

One of his discoveries at this time would've got the song straight away. Lee Dorsey sang on enduring Toussaint songs and productions – Working In The Coalmine, Ride Your Pony, Get Out Of My Life Woman, Can You Hear Me, Work Work Work, Confusion, Holy Cow. Dorsey was, said Toussaint, "very easy to work with. For one thing, we were very dear friends on and off stage, in and out of the studio. We rode motorcycles together, raced Cadillacs sometimes (*laughs*), and well, he depended on me more than many, maybe. When he was singing I would put my hand on my lip when he was not to sing, then point to him when he was to sing. So he was totally dependent on me when we was first doing the songs."

Toussaint usually wrote a song

➢

"Turn the piano player up behind the singer": king of the keys, songwriter, producer, arranger talent spotter, studio boss, master of many talents Allen Toussaint, circa 1978 (right) and 1963 (below).

"I'M JUST SORT OF RAMBLING THROUGH A TRANCHE OF TREASURES,' HE TOLD ME."

Photofest, Getty Images

The ever-dapper Toussaint entertains the 1981 New Orleans Jazz Festival; (inset top) in the right place with Dr. John at the Montreux Jazz Festival, July 1973. "Magic man" Art Neville of The Meters is in the background, far left.

THE LEGACY

Album: *Southern Nights* (Reprise, 1975)

The Sound: The *very* best of Toussaint on record would be a massive comp of his New Orleans productions and songs for others, many under the Naomi Neville pseudonym. But this quasi concept album, boasting the Glen Campbell-covered title track, funky opener Last Train, hit-in-waiting What Do You Want The Girl To Do? and more sung in his gentle tenor is near perfect.

for a particular artist. "Always specifically for the artist, every time… that was the only way I could ever see it."

In 1963, his career was interrupted by military service, but even in uniform he found time to write a hit. It came about when fellow musicians in the small band they formed on the base to play at weekends discovered that an instrumental, Java, on his first LP was the one turned into a 1964 Number 4 pop hit by US trumpeter Al Hirt.

"They thought that was the funniest thing in the world 'cos they thought it was too rinky tink, too popcorn or bubblegum. But I never agreed with them. For a joke I wrote about 30 songs in the mold of Java. And since I was in charge of the music, they had to play these songs (*chuckles*). Right before I got out of the military, we went to Houston and recorded about 12 of 15 of those songs and Whipped Cream was one of them." Picked up by young trumpeter Herb Alpert, in 1965 it became the title track of the Tijuana Brass's Number 1 US Pop Album.

Out of the Army that year, he set up in partnership with Marshall Sehorn – "a go-getter, very sort of Southern guy from Concord, North Carolina" and the perfect foil for Toussaint – Sehorn had first commissioned him to produce Bobby Marchan and then Dorsey. Toussaint found the magic ingredient for their enterprise. "When I got out of the military I would visit the French Quarter all the time because that's where a lot of the music was going on on every corner. And I heard some funk slide and syncopation jumping every which way and it was so wonderful. I walked into the place, the Ivanhoe, and there was Art Neville with this group. I said, Damn! Art Neville's done it again. Because Art Neville is a magic man, if he puts together a group it's gonna be magic and he's done it since he was a teenager."

That band became The Meters, effectively Toussaint's house band at Sansu productions, and a lure to numerous artists in much the way Booker T. And The M.G.'s were to Stax. Toussaint produced their hits Cissy Strut and Look-Ka Py Py, alchemic fusions of R&B and the newer James Brown/Sly Stone brewed funk. By the early '70s, he was arranging horns for The Band on concerts which became the live *Rock Of Ages*, producing Dr. John's *In The Right Place* and concurrently recording three solo albums for Reprise – *Toussaint* (1970), *Life, Love And Faith* ('72) and 1975's *Southern Nights*, which included more imperishable originals like From A Whisper To A Scream, and What Do You Want The Girl To Do, taken up by Esther Phillips and Boz Scaggs respectively.

In 1972, with Sehorn, he'd also set up Sea-Saint which became the go-to recording studio Cosimo's had once been, and drew young British singers like Jess Roden and Frankie Miller. "He was one of the most soulful people I've ever met – any continent, any city, any colour," Toussaint said of their work on Miller's 1973 album *High Life*. "Just an amazing vocalist, and in my set I always play one of the songs that I wrote for him." (In July 2009 he performed With You In Mind.) Bigger UK fish landed at Sea-Saint when Paul McCartney arrived to finish Wings' 1975 *Venus And Mars*, Toussaint guesting on piano. By then the studio was celebrating another smash, Labelle's Number 1 hit Lady Marmalade, produced by Toussaint, from the *Nightbirds* album. "When people were flown in, like Patti Labelle, I didn't get to know them *very* well, but I tried to go for what I thought would be the highlight of them, to find the highlight of them plus me equals what?"

In '76, remarkably, Toussaint even had a US Country Number 1 when Joe Stampley covered his All These Things. "I came up loving those saloon type of tinkling pianos… there was a lot of hillbilly music on the radio in my early days. More hillbilly than R&B."

Toussaint's career and life settled until Hurricane Katrina forced him out of New Orleans to New York, where he began playing Sundays at Joe's Pub in the East Village. He recorded 2006's *The River In Reverse* with Elvis Costello, struck out on the road and released *The Bright Mississippi* in 2009, with its wonderful piano interpretations of Sidney Bechet, Django Reinhardt, Jelly Roll Morton, Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington. It was produced by Joe Henry, of whom Toussaint said, "he sets a wonderful classic atmosphere to be creative in, has foresight on what's going on, but doesn't deal with the iron hand." Again, he could've been describing himself.

> "I HEARD SOME FUNK SLIDE AND SYNCOPATION JUMPING EVERY WHICH WAY AND IT WAS SO WONDERFUL."

Getty Images (3), Iconicpix, Rex Features, Ace Records

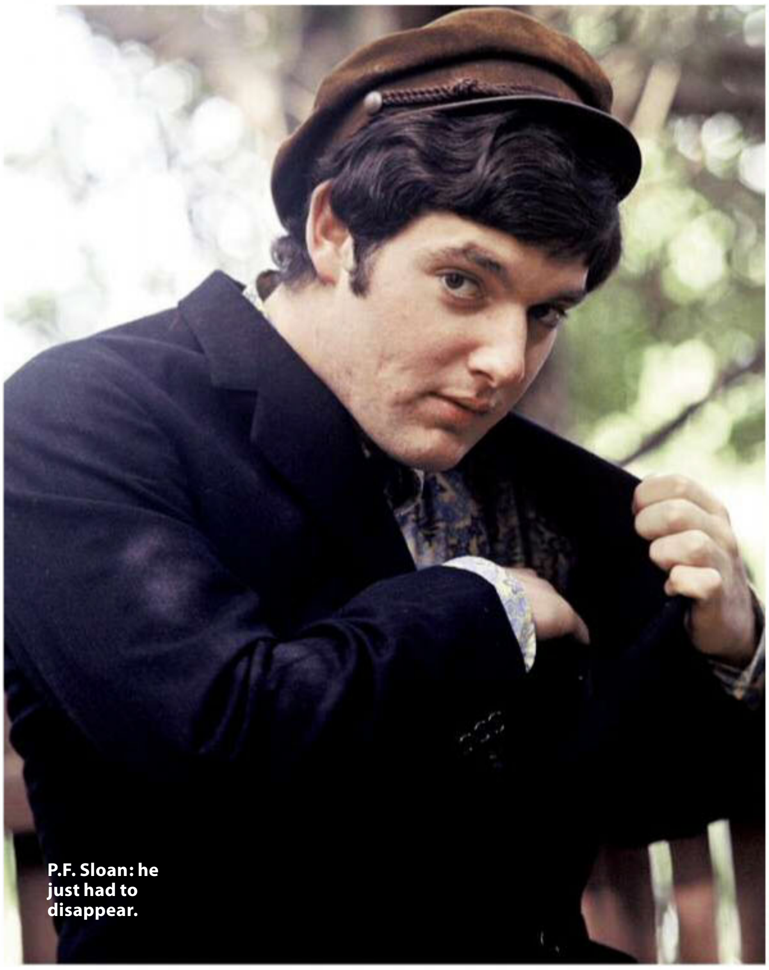
P.F. SLOAN

SONGWRITING ENIGMA

BORN 1945

P.F. Sloan was a 19-year-old session guitarist in Los Angeles when he wrote apocalyptic anthem Eve Of Destruction in 1964, which was turned into a US Number 1 by Barry McGuire the following year. For a time it seemed he couldn't put a foot wrong: with partner Steve Barri – they recorded together as The Fantastic Baggys, and were the brains behind The Grass Roots – Sloan also wrote the theme to The T.A.M.I Show, contributed to Jan & Dean's albums and had songs covered successfully by the likes of Herman's Hermits and Johnny Rivers. Yet his hopes of solo success were dashed after two late-'60s albums with the Dunhill label. "[Dunhill] destroyed everybody they came into touch with," he told MOJO in 2006. "P.F. Sloan just had to disappear." By 1970 he was disappeared enough for Jim Webb to write the self-explanatory P.F. Sloan about him, noting, "No one knows where he has gone." In the decades that followed, he made occasional appearances and albums, including 2006's *Sailover*. His memoir, What's Exactly The Matter With Me?, was published in 2014, the same year he duetted with Rumer on her cover of Webb's salute at St James' Church, Piccadilly. He had been suffering from pancreatic cancer.

Ian Harrison



P.F. Sloan: he just had to disappear.

PHIL 'PHILTHY ANIMAL' TAYLOR

MOTÖRHEAD DRUMMER, FORCE OF NATURE

BORN 1954

Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor was a man whose sense of mischief was keenly defined, and often on display via custom-made T-shirts (a favourite read: Whale Oil Beef Hooked). But, above all, Taylor was possessed with a unique drumming style that fitted Motörhead's approach perfectly. In many respects, the group's playing was unorthodox. Taylor, for instance, played off 'Fast' Eddie Clarke's guitar, allowing Lemmy's bass a free rein with the band's thunderous sound. It was his presence on the band's second album, 1979's *Overkill*, that crystallised their line of attack: from the double kick-drum introduction to the opening title track, Taylor's playing is fast and loose, underpinning Lemmy's machine gunning bass. He contributed much to the seven studio LPs that followed before his final departure in 1992. While Taylor had been ill for a while, his passing from liver failure will cause Motörhead fans to reflect on a time when Lemmy, Eddie and Phil seemed like an unstoppable force in a world full of anodyne compromise. We will truly miss him.

Phil Alexander

THEY ALSO SERVED

MERCHANDISE SELLER **NICK ALEXANDER** (above, b. 1979) was murdered during the terrorist attack at **The Eagles Of Death Metal** show at the Paris Bataclan on November 13. EODM vocalist **Jesse Hughes** paid tribute to him: "He stayed quiet and never called for help until he bled out because he didn't want anyone else to get hurt." The Colchester-born Alexander had also toured with **The Black Keys**, **Alice In Chains** and **Yusuf Islam**.

DRUMMER **ANDY WHITE** (b.1930) was the sessioneer who played on the version of **The Beatles**' Love Me Do that features tambourine (played by Ringo Starr), and which appears on the *Please Please Me* album and various compilations. He also drummed on the Fabs' P.S. I Love You. His other credits included **Tom Jones**'s It's Not Unusual and **Lulu**'s Shout: he also played with **Rod Stewart**, **Marlene Dietrich** and **Anthony Newley**.

VOCALIST **SCOTT WEILAND** (b.1967) found huge success in the 1990s fronting California alt rockers **Stone Temple Pilots**. From 2003 to 2008 he sang with rock supergroup **Velvet Revolver** and also released four solo albums, including one co-credited to **The Wildabouts**, the group he was touring with at the time of his December 3 death in Bloomington, Minnesota. His struggle with drug use was well documented: when his former bandmates in Stone Temple Pilots paid tribute, they reflected: "We know amidst the good and the bad you struggled, time and time again. It's what made you who you were."

DRUMMER **SMOKEY JOHNSON** (b.1936) was active during New Orleans' golden years of R&B and funk: he played with **Fats Domino** and did 28 years with **Dave Bartholomew**, recorded the **Mardi-Gras** evergreen It Ain't My Fault (written with **Wardell Quezergue**) and played on classics including **Professor Longhair**'s Big Chief and **Earl King**'s Trick Bag. He retired after a 1993 stroke.

NEW YORK DJ, journalist and party person **ANITA SARKO** (b.1947) played at nightspots including Danceteria, the Palladium and the Mudd Club in the late '70s and early '80s, and became known for her eclectic rock and dance sets. She took her own life.

PROMOTER and manager **PAUL KING** (b.1952) worked with acts including **The Police**, **Julian Cope**, **Tears For Fears**, **Level 42** and **Dire Straits** in the 1980s. In 2004 he was sentenced to three and half years in prison for fraud involving a hangover cure made from volcanic rock.

TRANSGENDER actor **HOLLY WOODLAWN** (b.1946) was the Warhol superstar who appeared in the movies Trash and Women In Revolt, and who **Lou Reed** referred to in the opening verse of his 1972 hit Walk On The Wild Side. She later performed in cabaret.

DRUMMER **KELVIN KNIGHT** played with Northern punk bands **The Jermz** and **The Jerks** before joining two-bass, female/male Leeds post-punks **Delta 5**, whose three singles for Rough Trade included the always-relevant, fractured Mind Your Own Business. He also played with **Gang Of Four** and, in recent years, managed groups in York.

FAMILY STONE trumpeter **CYNTHIA ROBINSON** (b.1944) played her horn with **Sly And The Family Stone** from 1967 to 1975, and sang the essential command, "All the squares go home!" on their 1968 breakthrough hit Dance To The Music. She continued to play on Sly's albums after the ground-breaking group's demise, and also worked with **Graham Central Station** (the band led by Family Stone bassist **Larry Graham**), **Funkadelic** and **Robert Cray**. In 1993 she and her bandmates were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; in 2006 she joined a reunited formation of the group, and played with them until this year.

Clive Prior

"All the squares go home!" The Family Stone's Cynthia Robinson.

THE MOJO INTERVIEW

The **Kosmische** guitar hero of **Neu!** and **Harmonia** saw his **Kraftwerk** bandmates find the **success** that **eluded** him. Michael Rother now revels in gigs and silence. "Do you do the **smart thing**, or do what you **love**?" he asks.

Interview by **ANDREW MALE** • Portrait by **SØREN SOLKÆR**

"I LOOK INTO HIS EYES," MICHAEL ROTHER says, "and I can see if he is sane or mad, whether he is going to play well or play terribly."

Rother might well be relating an experience with his late, wayward Neu! bandmate Klaus Dinger, but no. He's detailing a possibly related fascination with errant English snooker genius, Ronnie O'Sullivan.

We are sitting at a table by the draughty doorway of a Thai restaurant in Copenhagen while the former Kraftwerk, Neu! and Harmonia guitarist describes his home life in Forst in northern Germany, now largely a place of silence where the 66-year-old relaxes by swimming and playing tennis, or losing himself in the quiet complexities of the long game that is world-class snooker.

The restful nature of this home life might have something to do with how ludicrously at peace and youthful Rother appears in person. A warm, benign presence, he remains enviably handsome, in a manner that suggests the noble bust of some Roman dignitary. His legacy – with Neu! finally established among the greats, and Harmonia commemorated in the recent five-LP box *Complete Works* – is underlined by his vigorous ongoing roadshow, a "fast-forward" set of Neu!, Harmonia and solo tracks, with Rother backed by the killer combination of Franz Bargmann, guitarist in Berlin Kosmische acolytes Camera, and Hans Lampe, the 63-year-old *mensch-maschine* drummer who played on the second side of *Neu! 75* before joining Klaus Dinger in his giddy post Neu!-outfit, La Düsseldorf.

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

"Incredible!" Mute's **Daniel Miller** on Michael Rother.

"I first heard Neu! on John Peel in '72. That combination of repetition and Michael's strong melodic sense was incredible. Mute tried to reissue the Neu! LPs [but] Michael and Klaus refused to sign the same contract. So when Grönland released them, as a label I was disappointed, as a fan I was delighted."

Joe Dilworth

Later in the evening, after the trio have powered through a Shinkansen power-groove of Dino, E-Musik, and an epic to-the-horizon supercut of Hallogallo and Für Immer, converting the too-cool all-age bohemian hipsters of Copenhagen's Jazzhouse into a bouncing, sweating mass of head-banging goons shouting for more, Rother allows himself a small raised glass of whisky backstage. "It's thrilling," he says. "To be on the stage, in direct contact with people, and not in my quiet studio, this is a feeling I very much enjoy."

Rother still composes music, most recently a film score for 2015 bank-robbery drama, Les Brigands, an experience he describes as "a new feeling, collaborating with the images, the emotions of the actors" but he remains undecided as to whether there will be any more official releases.

"I don't know," he sighs. "Maybe I should put them out. I know it would probably be a smart move but that's a different perspective, whether you do something smart or do what you love."

You spent your childhood in Munich, Wilmslow, Karachi, Düsseldorf… What did your parents do? Why did they move around so much?

My father worked for BEA, then Lufthansa. Lufthansa were stationed in Manchester and we lived in Wilmslow for 11 months. That was such

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a sweet school. We had animals in the class, running around. Then my father was stationed in Pakistan, in Karachi. That was tough. This British military school. "Atten-shun!" No fooling, very rough. I remember having bad dreams. But there was also the seaside, being in the water all day long, which is something I still carry in my life. Then my father was moved back to Düsseldorf. The idea was to just stay for two or three years, and then my father would take over the North American division, but then he got ill, had cancer and died, so plans changed. Money was not that great. So that story ended, we stayed in Düsseldorf and I started playing guitar.

When did that interest in music start?

In Pakistan. Already I had picked up an instrument, which you hear on *Neu!*, "the Japan banjo" [aka shamisen]. I got that and tried to make a guitar out of it. Music was always there. And I have memories of my brother doing rock'n'roll parties in Munich. Little Richard, Elvis Presley. The thing I always loved about Little Richard was that strong sense of rushing forward, of not being restrained. Because he was gay, he was black, it must have been a terrible time for him in the '50s, so he found this solution, just crash through all the walls, just go through them. That stayed with me.

You've said another early music memory was hearing your mother play Chopin on the piano…

To be quite honest, I have no clear memory of that. I think this was something before memory, before I understood, and maybe that's even more important. All these different inspirations, Chopin, Little Richard, music in Pakistan, all that went together with the '60s beat music.

Your first group, Spirits Of Sound, were a covers band playing English pop and rock. Were they also a place of safety?

You're right, with my father being sick, yes. I learned guitar at home. I played for hours on end – twang! – it must have been *terrible* for my mother, but she always supported me. Her story was rather sad because she would have been a concert pianist but what with some sort of depression and no money, she had to go to work in an office, and use her piano skills for typing. We *started* as a just simple covers band. Everybody had started playing music in Düsseldorf. It was the British pop explosion: Beatles, Kinks, Stones. They totally fascinated us. Wolfgang Flür played in an excellent Beatles cover band called The Beathovens before he joined SoS. He was a good drummer, and he could also sing background vocals. Wolfgang Riechmann's speciality was his coarse bluesy vocals… Free, Peter Green, Cream. Very tragic. He was killed by strangers in Düsseldorf in 1978, two guys who'd been kicked out of several bars… they stabbed him and he bled to death.

You say Spirits Of Sound, were "just" a covers band but that's a great line-up of future German music names, Wolfgang Riechmann, Wolfgang Flür … and you were together until 1969, so…

Yes, it would be unjust to refer to them as *just* a covers band. We gradually moved away from what we called "sklavische kopie", slave-copy, to trying our own ideas. We took more liberties. Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Peter Green and… Jimi Hendrix. Leave a gap there because Hendrix changed everything. This was like somebody falling from the skies. A different star. I saw him play live in Düsseldorf in '68 and the sound was very poor [but] what I really loved was the studio recordings, the way he made the guitar do things I've never heard before. So beautiful. Then we moved even further away from these influences, like moving away from Earth, a spaceship out of the gravitation of these heroes.

So why did SoS split?

Because they went nowhere. I didn't know where I was going either. I became increasingly unhappy, unfulfilled with that music. I was this small guitar hero.

When did you become aware of this idea of "year zero", stripping yourself of all these western music influences? Did it coincide with what was happening politically in West Germany at the time?

You can't separate it [but] it's not like in February 1970 I woke up and said, I will leave everything behind! This was gradual. It was, OK, I don't feel like playing the old blues structures of American and British pop music anymore. I was also the youngest in the band and I was around these politically active students. You become aware of your own situation in society. I didn't feel like marching in the streets or throwing stones, but I noticed what was going on in the world, what was wrong; Vietnam, the very conservative German society… From '69 to early '71, I worked at Alexius Hospital in Neuss, doing community service as a conscientious objector. There was another guy working at the hospital who was into jazz [so] I looked into jazz. I tried. My girlfriend at the time, Ann Weitz, listened to The Velvet Underground. This was something. Waiting For My Man. Moe Tucker. This fluent forward movement, not aimed at the next stop, music that just goes on. I wanted to find out something different but I didn't know anyone. I was on my own.

So meeting Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider was a major turning point?

Oh yes. I was completely alone and this guy at the hospital, a friend there, who also was a guitar player, invited me one day to join him recording music with a band named Kraftwerk. It was one of those moments in life. Either you go right or left. Because I didn't know the band, I wasn't eager to go. Kraftwerk, what a silly name. But OK. Then, jamming with Ralf

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Taking the Michael: the lives of Rother's.

1 Model pupil: the young Michael Rother in school uniform, Karachi Grammar School, 1960.

2 "I was this small guitar hero": Michael in Düsseldorf's rock covers band Spirits Of Sound, 1968.

3 On the road to Autobahn: Kraftwerk founder Florian Schneider (seated back right) in 1971 with shortlived Kraftwerk 2 line-up of Rother (back left) and Klaus Dinger.

4 "We were rejected totally": Harmonia and Brian Eno (far left) in Forst, 1976.

5 "In 2004, other things started to happen": Rother and John Frusciante in Forst that year.

6 "It's not like I woke up and left everything behind": experimental shot by Ann Weitz, 1970.

7 "There were these signs that something was happening": (from left) Rother, Julian Cope, Dieter Moebius, Bristol, 2007.

8 "To be on stage is a feeling I very much enjoy": Michael holds onto that emotion with Hans Lampe (right) and Franz Bargmann, Amsterdam, 2015.

9 "Jamming with Ralf Hütter there was something in the air": Rother, on-stage with Kraftwerk, 1971.

All pictures courtesy of Michael Rother (Marc Emmerik, Christine Roedelius, Ann Weitz) (9)

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SPIRITS OF SOUND

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HARMONIA
HARMONIA

Hütter, I just picked up a bass and thought, "Wait a minute, I can communicate with this guy." We are musically, melodically and harmonically, on the same page. The same idea was in the air. Florian and Klaus [Dinger] were sitting on the sofa, listening. So we exchanged phone numbers. To be honest I'm not sure what would have happened to me if I'd stayed alone. Would I have started recording an album on my own? I'm not sure. I doubt it, because I'd already started studying psychology at university. But then I was with Kraftwerk, touring Germany, and suddenly I'm not alone. It was the opening to a completely new world, playing live and on TV. We needed the audience, the feeling of sweat and excitement because the music was not very sophisticated. It was very rough, very simple. With Klaus Dinger, his power came partly from frustration and anger at many things. Also, Florian, not going into private details, I didn't have anything that compared to the anger these guys experienced. But apart from all the struggles that went on, especially between Klaus and Florian, two very spiky characters, it was inspirational, playing with Florian and Klaus, meeting Conny Plank and Ralf and, even though we failed, recording the second Kraftwerk album.

Do tapes exist of those recordings?

Oh yes. I think Florian has put them into a vault. Everything before Autobahn does not exist. This is silly, but it's their decision. I don't know what's in their minds.

Given he was such a spiky character, why did you decide you wanted to carry on playing music with Klaus Dinger?

Klaus and I seemed to agree on the music more than Florian. Klaus and I were very different personalities but on a musical level there was no fighting. Never, never, never. We totally appreciated what the other contributed. Outside the studio I didn't want to have him around, he was not someone I wanted as a friend, but as a drummer, as an artist, it was obvious that he was amazing, the power, the seriousness he invested in the music.

Did any of the ideas on the first Neu! LP grow out of those aborted sessions for the second Kraftwerk album?

No. That music was quite different. When we asked Conny Plank to record the first Neu! album, Klaus and I did not even rehearse. We just had these *ideas* of what we would do. I had one or two melodies like Weissensee and Im Glück and we of course had this idea of one track that "goes to the horizon", like Hallogallo. I think that was the expression. My guitar? Clouds. There's this rail, or this road, and we storm along the road and then you have these clouds, this changing sky. Looking back I think, Wow, I was quite optimistic (*laughs*).

> "**Klaus Dinger** was not someone I wanted as a **friend**, but as an **artist** it was obvious he was **amazing**."

What was Conny's role?

Psychologically, a mediator, sometimes. We were like a triangle and because Conny was a very strong impressive personality, we could play around, not struggling like this (*hits fists together*). Conny was subtle, without ego. He did not push you. Maybe Klaus and I would not have been receptive to that. He was like a good conductor. He was able to memorise all these elements scattered on tape, doing this great assembling of sounds with just one reverb plate and one tape machine for delay. Quite unbelievable. At the time, I'm not sure there was anyone else in Germany who was interested in us. We were poor, but we decided not to ask a record company for money, to stay free and independent. We put our own money on the table and Conny shared the risk with us.

The speeded up and slowed-down tracks on the second side of *Neu! 2* could be described as the experiment of necessity. Did that in any way influence your subsequent tape work with Harmonia?

That's interesting. I've never heard that question before. I don't really think so. Sorry to disappoint you. The thing with the second side of *Neu! 2*, neither Klaus nor me had anything in mind like that. *Neu! 2* was not that pleasant. There was a lot of stress, especially that last night. At the end of a week in the studio, when we realised we were pointing our Titanic straight at the iceberg. How much music do we have? That's not an LP!

Maybe it also has to do with a lack of inspiration, trying to improve on Hallogallo with Für Immer, make it a super-Hallogallo. That was not a smart idea. Hallogallo, if you take one element away, the whole thing falls apart. Für Immer has violin, piano, backwards guitars, forwards guitars… because we took advantage of the 16-track technology for the first time, doing all the overdubs took up much more time. Maybe it's psychologically understandable that we sort of ran into this trap, trying to improve something that cannot be

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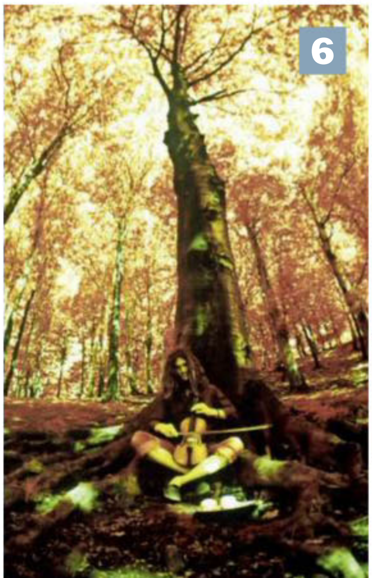
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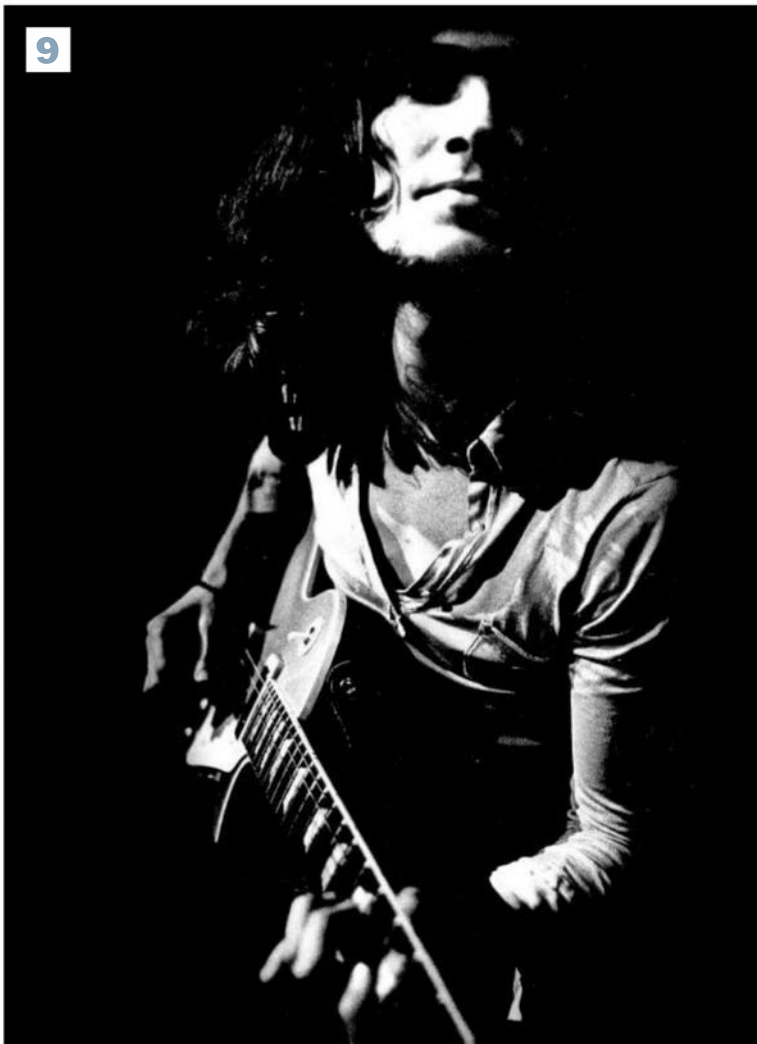
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"I think the situation now is, let things happen": Michael Rother looks ahead, Copenhagen, November 2015.

Søren Solkær

improved. Hallogallo, with the distance we have, it has, in its frailty, this beauty.

We talked a lot in MOJO 264 about Harmonia, the band you formed in 1973 with Cluster's Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius. Were you pleased with the response to the Harmonia box set?

Amazing. I think the record company are nearly out of stock. Maybe I didn't expect anything. I was just so happy to have this whole story of Harmonia in one place. I think I said last time that, originally, Harmonia was rejected totally. Sometimes you're lucky as an artist, and your own love is shared. What happened with Harmonia, this has always been… a wound is far too strong a word, but I thought this wasn't fair. Now the fans really seem to appreciate what we presented and, yes, I'm more than happy. How do you call it, the corners of my mouth are up to my ears.

Did Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider ask you to rejoin Kraftwerk after they heard the first Harmonia album, *Musik Von Harmonia*?

Yes, but I'm not sure that was the reason. They just knew me, and wanted to do a tour with Autobahn so they called me. We met, I played them *Music Von Harmonia*. I was proud of the album. They nodded. "Interesting, yes" but I think that was not the reason they called me. It was they knew I could help them perform Autobahn. I had to decline because I was totally obsessed with Harmonia.

And did you hearing Autobahn feed back into Harmonia as well?

That's an interesting question. Maybe there's some truth in that, because the lyrics, of course, there is some similarity between the lyrics on *Deluxe* and Autobahn. I guess I have to accept that. While we were making *Deluxe* we came to overcome our shyness and I guess hearing Autobahn made it easier to do that. They inspired us. Not the lyrics as lyrics but the idea to open your mouth. I have great respect for Kraftwerk's output. Suddenly a German band was touring in the States, in the US charts. Of course, that made us think, if they can do it… What we're doing is not so much different, we can also do it as well. But Harmonia *Deluxe* was not popular. It was just another flop, a failure.

How changed was Klaus Dinger when you went back to make *Neu! 75*.

Well, we had this contract for a third Neu! album and while I was working with Harmonia in Forst I developed some ideas that didn't work with Roedelius and Moebius that, I thought, could work with Neu! I think Klaus was becoming a bit big-headed, much more focused on appearance and image. He'd started a record label called Dingerland, with offices in the poshest part of Düsseldorf and he'd started working with his brother Thomas and Hans Lampe as drummers because he wanted to move away from the drums and be the entertainer, hopping around on stage. He had this craving to strut. Some of his traits were not acceptable in my life, but we agreed on doing half of *Neu! 75* as a duo, and the other half as a quartet, like he wanted. So we started

> "I **never** wanted to be a **solo** musician. I was quite unhappy when **Roedelius** and **Moebius** did not want to continue **Harmonia**. I would have **struggled on**."

with the quartet and I said, "OK Klaus, now it's time for my project." He was a cheeky guy and he just tried to ignore that. We sat together like this for about five hours. Nothing. Then, after five hours, he relented. He was a very demanding guy. I didn't really enjoy that.

When did you become aware that these projects, Neu! and Harmonia, which had not succeeded in Germany, were having a different kind of success and influence?

I'm not totally sure. Of course, when David Bowie called me in '77 [with the idea that Rother might work on *Low*]. And I knew from talking to Brian Eno in '76 when he was in Forst with Harmonia that something was happening, how they were talking about our music, but that was something quite isolated. In the '80s nobody talked about Neu!. A few years later I stumbled on Ciccone Youth, Two Cool Rock Chicks Listening To Neu! and I thought, "Hmm, that's strange".

Then you had these other signs that something was happening… Daniel Miller approaching us and trying to sign us to Mute. Then you had all these bootlegs. I saw stacks of Neu! bootlegs in America and Japan. Then unfortunately, with Klaus and the liberties he took with what he released as *Neu! 4* in 1996.

What is the story behind *Neu! 4*?

These were recordings we made in 1985, '86 and then we stopped. We sent out the tapes to all kinds of UK record labels, probably a mistake because some of that music is really disappointing. The tapes didn't really find much support. At that time Klaus and I were already struggling a bit too much. I'd probably made a mistake doing too much work with Fairlight computers and electronics and Klaus was maybe also not that open. Anyway, we fought over silly things, stupid situations, sitting in my studio in Forst, arguing over whose mix was louder, instead of focusing on the basic idea of our music. In the end, we both lost. We decided to quit for the moment, split the tapes, seal the tapes. Years passed, then suddenly I get this strange fax from Klaus congratulating me on the release of *Neu! 4*, which was never meant to be called *Neu! 4*. It was *Neu! 85*. He later apologised for his actions, but not in a very sincere way. But Klaus was desperate, desperate for cash. I'm not saying he was a crook. He was not a normal crook, he just took some liberties, which you can't.

What were you able to do as a solo musician that you couldn't do with Neu! and Harmonia?

Well, first of all, I never wanted to be a solo musician, never wanted to do a solo record. It was more that Roedelius and Moebius did not want to continue Harmonia. I was quite unhappy. I had to realise that Harmonia wasn't going anywhere. I would have carried on. Keep on struggling! But they didn't believe in the project.

Looking back, a little wiser, I have to realise that the idea of this structured rhythmical music did not meet with their strengths, but at the time I thought, "OK this is our life." So we decided to do something separate and I made this arrangement [to record] with Conny Plank and [Can drummer] Jaki Liebezeit because, of course, I admired his drumming and I was fortunate, because [Rother's first solo LP] *Flammende Herzen* got all the recognition I'd always expected Harmonia to get.

You've repeatedly praised Jaki and Conny's contributions to your solo LPs but after *Fernwärme*, in 1982, you stopped working with them and started doing everything by yourself. Why was that?

The success of my first three solo albums allowed me to buy my own professional studio gear. Unlimited time to work on music and the best audio quality was a dream come true. After *Fernwärme* in 1982 I discovered the Fairlight and became totally thrilled with the possibilities. My decision to do everything myself on *Lust* [in 1983] was not a decision against Conny or Jaki, but the next logical step forward. Maybe I overdid it, but I never regretted buying that awfully expensive machine. To work alone felt totally normal.

ROTHERVATIN'

Kosmische guitar king's three key LPs. By **Andrew Male**.

WITH NEU!

Neu!
Neu!
BRAIN, 1972
★★★★★

The first duo collaboration by Kraftwerk outcasts Michael Rother and Klaus Dinger, recorded with Conny Plank in Hamburg's Star Studios, in December 1971, remains an album of luminous power. From the fragile, hypnotic intensity of Hallogallo, to the futuristic space blues of Weissensee and Negativland's remorseless machine-tooled heavy groove, the music of *Neu!* has somehow resisted time, familiarity and imitation, to remain modern, exhilarating and eternal.

WITH HARMONIA

Harmonia
Deluxe
BRAIN, 1975
★★★★★

Of all the music Rother made with Cluster's Dieter Moebius and Hans-Joachim Roedelius at their country retreat in Forst between 1973 and 1976, this is the most fully realised, the guitarist's elegant song structures lending a trance-like form and direction to the Cluster duo's electronic explorations and, under the influence of Kraftwerk's Autobahn, the addition of mantric vocal refrains to both Monza (Rauf Und Runter) and the title-track brought a melancholy humanity and giddy pop bliss to this elemental bucolic experiment.

SOLO

Michael Rother
Sterntaler
SKY, 1978
★★★★

It's a toss-up between this, Rother's solo 1977 debut, *Flammende Herzen* and 1979's *Katzenmusik* as to which LP best exemplifies his solo work. Sited between the naïve baroque atmospheres of Windham Hill and the mellow Buddhist electronica of Florian Fricke's Popol Vuh, but with a constant to-the-horizon vision, driven by Jaki Liebezeit's ever-precise drumming, Rother's memorable melodies suggest bright national anthems and Olympic melodies for new European utopias.

That purely solo approach changed with your last album, 2004's *Remember (The Great Adventure)* which also featured vocals from the actor Herbert Grönmeyer and the English singer Sophie Williams.

I was in a bar in Hamburg with my friend Thomas Beckmann saying, "Thomas I want to start on my new album, but I need a human voice not just samples." Then a door opened and a cello came in, followed by a small lady. She asked the guy at the bar, "Can I play?" She started playing and singing. We both looked at each other and just smiled because it was like this is not happening. I was totally blown away.

Afterwards, I approached her and mentioned Neu! and Harmonia. I think she was quite sceptical. She went home that night – she was staying with friends – and what was on the turntable? Neu! She impressed me by not trying to impress me.

That album didn't go anywhere, and of course I was not happy about it, but in 2004 other things happened like the collaboration with John Frusciante and Josh Klinghoffer and then a year later my first ATP, and so a new chapter started, playing live dates around the world. I started liking that instead, flying to Mexico, Argentina, Japan…

And home has become a place of silence…

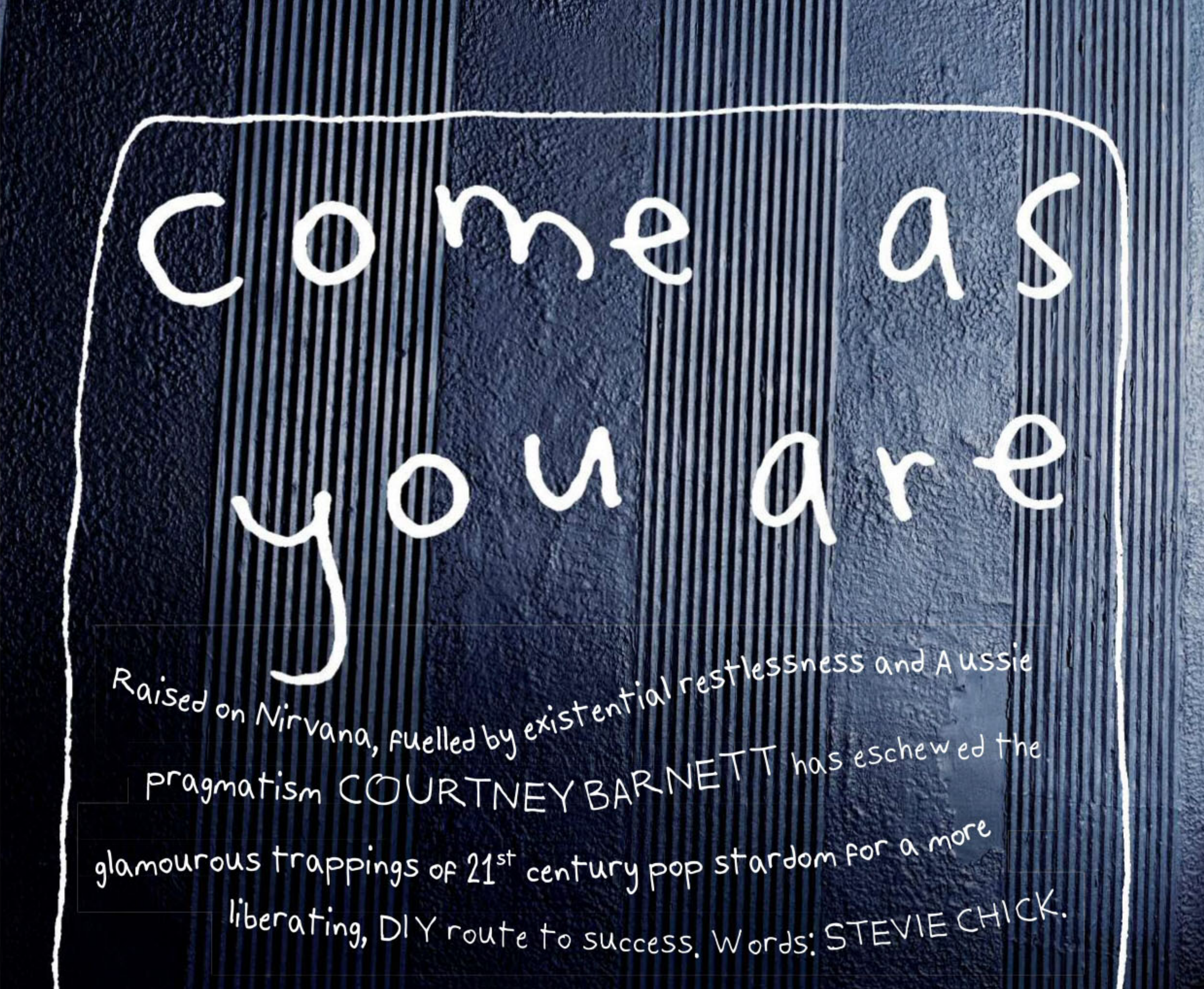
Well, yes, Forst has always been very silent. Me and my cats. I love my cats. They can't do anything wrong with me. I think the situation now is, let things happen. I have projects in the back of my mind and sometimes I think maybe I should do something but then I'm not so sure. I think now I'm a bit over the idea of sitting alone in my studio and chewing on material for weeks and weeks until I go mad.

My last question was going to be something about final goals left to achieve, but having talked to you I'm not sure that's how you think.

I would like to win Wimbledon (*laughs*), but you're right, I don't work that way. Everyone in my position should realise how fortunate they are. The way I live, the freedom I am experiencing, the reception the music is getting, all the smiles and all the joy… money's not the goal.

I can't really tell you anything I need to achieve. The idea of having wishes is something I doubt very much. Always asking for more? You have to realise what you already have. And even though the long road we've been talking about was also filled with moments of frustration and puzzlement, it always went on, somehow, and sometimes even better than what you originally wanted. What happens unintentionally is sometimes much better than what you originally had in mind. Ⓜ

Michael Rother performs at Under The Bridge in west London on February 5 (www.underthebridge.co.uk). The five album vinyl Harmonia box set, Complete Works, is out now on Grönland Records.



Come as you are

Raised on Nirvana, fuelled by existential restlessness and Aussie pragmatism COURTNEY BARNETT has eschewed the glamourous trappings of 21st century pop stardom for a more liberating, DIY route to success. Words: STEVIE CHICK.

IT'S LATE NOVEMBER 2015, AND AT SYDNEY'S Star Casino, celebrities are gathering for the annual ARIA Awards, Australia's Grammys. It's a glitzy affair, stars like Kylie Minogue and Tina Arena gracing the red carpet in impressively glamorous gowns; even psychedelicists Tame Impala have donned suits. One of the year's most-nominated artists, however, is notable by her absence. Instead, half a world away, Courtney Barnett is playing the first of two sold-out shows at London's Forum.

"I'm so *happy* I wasn't there!" she grins, relieved, the next afternoon. "I hate public speaking. And I know the concept of those awards is to say something is 'good'. But the other aspects: the dresses, the 'glamour'… It's just bullshit. I would never dress up. I don't like big parties and stuff."

Nominated eight times, Barnett snaps up three ARIAs, for Best Female Artist, Breakthrough Artist and Best Independent Release for her debut full-length, *Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit*. Accepting via satellite video link-up in the wee small hours after her gig, she thanks her cat Bubbles and her girlfriend (and fellow singer/songwriter) Jen Cloher. She doesn't dress up for the speech, sporting the white 'Choose Love' T-shirt she wore at the gig last night, and will wear at tonight's gig, and is indeed wearing right now, sat in the nearby Bull & Gate pub, sipping a glass of Coke.

No media-trained pop-wannabe, Barnett eschews snappy patter in favour of "like"s and "y'know"s and copious ellipses, sounding enough like a J Mascis lyric brought-to-life to be incorrectly labelled a 'slacker'. She says she's naturally shy, but when she stops sentences mid-flow to start them again from another angle, it's like she's trying to perfectly nail what she's saying, with the accuracy of her pithy, often stingingly hilarious lyrics, which are the end-product of days, weeks, months and sometimes years of editing.

"Obviously, the recognition is great…" she says of the ARIAs. "But that's not the point of why I do this." Barnett's enjoyed a torrent of recognition from all over the globe in 2015, going Top 20 in the UK and the US and topping Billboard's independent, alternative, rock and folk charts, while she's performed her droll, thoughtful and often-rocking songs on TV chat shows, at festivals and on legendary stages across the world. She estimates she's spent 80 per cent of the year on the road, adding that, for a self-described "anxious person", such epic sorties are "like a rollercoaster of *everything*… It's just a crazy kind of world to live in."

It's a world she's gained access to thanks to plenty of DIY elbow grease, an existential restlessness that's occasionally tipped over into depression, and a candid, witty and unique voice that has struck a chord with similarly anxious ➢

Pictures: TOM OLDHAM

Sometimes she sits and thinks: "I'm ready to go home for a bit and just read, write and chill out." Courtney Barnett speaks for us all, London, November 24, 2015.

And sometimes she just stands: Barnett's philosophy – "All I've come up with is, You have to be kind to people."

> "Writing a song can be a tedious, heart-breaking, crazy-making process. Every time, it feels like a fluke."

listeners. But it's also a treadmill she wants to step off for a while. "I'm ready to go home for a bit and just read, write and chill out," she nods, yawning. "I'm so tired today, I feel like such a weirdo."

BARNETT GREW UP IN Church Point, a quiet suburb just north of Sydney; her mother had been a ballerina and her father had worked in the theatre, but by the time Courtney arrived, mum worked in an office and dad in a screen-printing factory. "We watched TV, ate dinner, and did family things," she says, of her resolutely "normal" upbringing. "They'd take us to galleries, and the ballet every now and again. But I was a kid, so I was like, I don't want to go to the gallery or the ballet, they're boring!"

Rock music was a different matter. She'd watch Rage, the Australian music TV strand, every weekend with her brother, and they'd pore over "magazines full of guitar gods and shit". There weren't many records in the house, but a neighbour would make the kids mix-tapes that segued from Jimi Hendrix to Nirvana, tapes she remembers as "loud and fun – stuff you could jump around to".

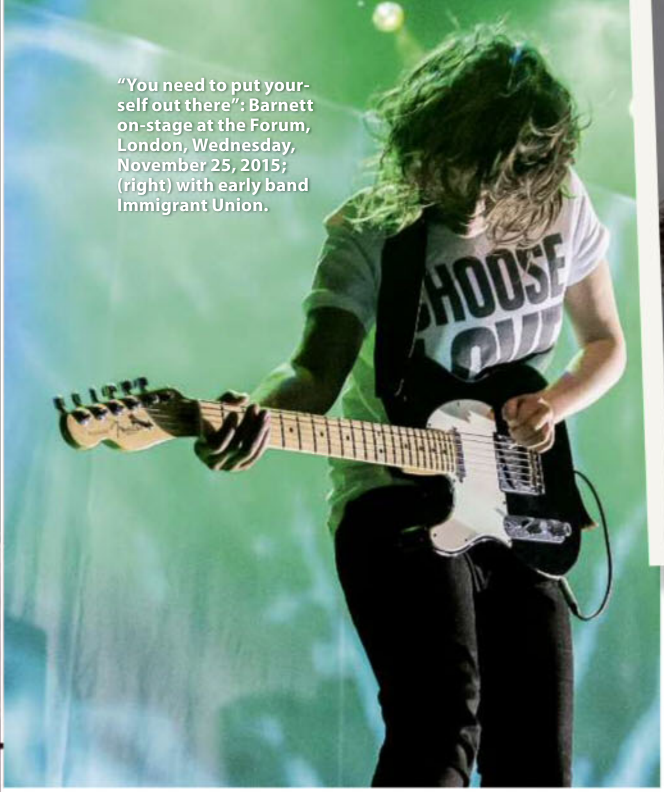
Beguiled by the instrument from an early age, Barnett first picked up the guitar at the age of 10; by the time she was 12 she was playing in school jazz and concert bands. "I was always trying to start my own bands, but no one else was interested," she sighs. "So I would play guitar for girls who sang covers songs. I was always the guitarist." She'd been writing her own songs as soon as she began playing guitar, songs she describes as "kind of earnest and embarrassing. But they were never going to be genius, were they?"

Aged 16 she moved with her family to Hobart, two hours' flight from Sydney. It was there that she played her first open-mike nights, while studying Fine Art at the nearby Tasmanian School Of Art, inspired by the photography of Nan Goldin. "I liked how *real* her photos looked," she says. "It was grimy, and the people didn't look perfect, and your mind would wander and focus on all these little details." Realism, and those little details, would become key qualities of her songs.

But she couldn't keep her mind on her course. "I'd started playing gigs and recording songs, and I was doing that instead of schoolwork." Two years in, she dropped out and moved to Melbourne, for "a change of scenery, and a challenge". Financing her music with a slew of shitty jobs – "I worked at Maccas, delivered pizzas, sold shoes…" – she was waylaid by a depression that had bubbled under for some years. "I pretty much just stayed in bed. My girlfriend then was really worried. I was on medication, a bit of a fuckin' zombie." The source of her angst, she reckons, was "trying to figure out what to do with my life – and what the purpose of living is."

Medication just numbed her. Songwriting, though, proved a salvation. "It's

COURTNEY
BARNETT
THE DOUBLE EP: A SEA OF SPLIT PEAS
courtney
barnett
sometimes i sit and think,
and sometimes i just sit.



"You need to put yourself out there": Barnett on-stage at the Forum, London, Wednesday, November 25, 2015; (right) with early band Immigrant Union.

a self-learning process. It wasn't about becoming a better songwriter. It was about figuring out who I was, and what I was doing. And writing a song can be a tedious, fuckin' heart-breaking, crazy-making process, and every time, it feels like a fluke. But finishing a song… It's the highest kind of satisfaction I know. And it's the best way I know to express myself."

She hooked up with some kindred musicians, began playing "every fuckin' bar in Melbourne", and tried touring the rest of Australia, a costly, Pyrrhic exercise. Then she got a manager, who recommended she commit her songs to tape. Her grandma helped Barnett set up her own label, Milk! Records, and she released her debut EP, I've Got A Friend Called Emily Ferris, in 2012.

"Someone wrote about it in the paper, and slowly, really slowly, people started coming to our shows, and buying the CD," she remembers. A second EP, 2013's How To Carve A Carrot Into A Rose, contained Avant Gardener, the deadpan and darkly hilarious true-life, near-death tale of how a reluctant act of weeding led to a seizure and an ambulance ride. "I grew up watching Monty Python with my dad," she says, explaining how she translated a brush with mortality into such a drily amusing track. "I don't mean that I'm funny, but that's how I look at things."

A video-clip for the song went viral, while an international compilation of the EPs, *A Sea Of Split Peas*, led to press acclaim, then plans to tour abroad (Barnett's first trip outside Australia), then appearances on America's still-influential Tonight Show, and crazy experiences like opening for Blur at Madison Square Garden. "We thought we'd better make the most of it, because it must all be a mistake," she says, with characteristic Aussie pragmatism. When that first international media attention arrived – from influential US website Pitchfork – she slept through panicky phone-calls from her manager because she was hungover after a gig, then awoke to ask, "What's fuckin' 'Pitchfork'?"

The next step was writing and recording her debut album, but with a bigger budget and, for the first time, expectations, Barnett was once again plagued by her existential angst. "There was pressure," she says. "Not from outside, but from within me." To focus her mind she'd set herself tasks. "I'd say, Today, write a pop song." And perhaps the triumph of *Sometimes I Sit And Think…* is how effortless those buzzsaw-powered pop songs feel, and how fine they are.

Courtney love

Three scene-spanning collaborations by Barnett.

Immigrant Union

THE END HAS COME

Barnett played slide guitar in the Melbourne folk-pysch band fronted by Dandy Warhols' drummer Brent DeBoer. She leads on this slice of trippy, country haze that closes second album, *Anyway*.

Fraser A. Gorman

SHINY GUN

Gorman supported Barnett in summer 2015, often guesting in her set. CB repaid the favour playing a bored anchorwoman in the video for his recent single.

Courtney Barnett

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE RSVP'ING TO A PARTY

Barnett's 2011 proto confessional, co-written with The Finks' Oliver Mestitz, driven by typewriter percussion, was heard in Melbourne short film Wordless.

ONE OF THE MOTIVATORS behind Barnett's early exit from art school was a sense "that I was too scared to raise my hand in class to speak. It didn't feel healthy. I was, like, You need to figure this out, you need to put yourself out there." Thus the move to Melbourne, the open-mike nights, putting herself 'out there' as far as she possibly could.

Tonight she leads her power trio (The CB3) on-stage with a no-nonsense fearlessness, and between the churning bubblegrunge verses and choruses of her best-loved songs ("I grew up a huge Nirvana-head," she explains, "that heavy pop music") she effortlessly plays guitar-hero, stomping and striding like Neil Young at his most ragged and glorious, and bruising lots of Kurt-flavoured din from her amps, as the capacity Forum pogos as one.

She delivers her lyrics, meanwhile, with ineffable cool, sharing moments of vulnerability (Kim's Caravan's helplessness in the face of ecological peril), angst (Pedestrian At Best's canny seesaw between damaged self-esteem and the music industry's empty flattery) and withering social criticism worthy of '90s cartoon heroine Daria (Nobody Really Cares If You Don't Go To The Party), the woman who couldn't raise her arm in class now finding empowerment in this most bared of outlets. "It's liberating to say these things to strangers," she said, earlier. "People connect, like, 'Oh my god! I felt that too once!'"

Songwriting remains her greatest salvation. "Often I write songs for friends going through a hard time – a break-up, or a death," she says. "I'm really bad at expressing myself. I feel like I'm a bad friend when people go through that sort of thing; you're supposed to say, 'I'm so sorry for your loss', or whatever. But it feels so… impersonal, and fake. So sometimes I don't say anything… Like, I feel a lot for them, but I don't know how to express it, so I end up not saying anything, and maybe seeming like a heartless dickhead. So I spend ages writing a song about them. I use songwriting as a form of communication."

As for the anxiety, that's still a work in process. "I just turned 28," she says, "it's not like I have anything more figured out than I did a couple of years ago. All I've come up with is, you have to be kind to people. You know? But someone gave me The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy for my birthday (*laughs*). That whole concept, of the question of Life, The Universe And Everything was hilarious. Apparently the answer I've been looking for is '42'." Ⓜ

Courtney with girlfriend Jen Cloher, 2013.

Tom Oldham (2), Getty Images

RIDERS ON THE STORM

Fighting the rock wars since 1983, Ian Astbury & Billy Duffy have also been known to battle each other. Andrew Perry joins The Cult for a wild Californian ride to find the pair finally accepting their differences and confirming their outsider status.

Portrait by Piper Ferguson

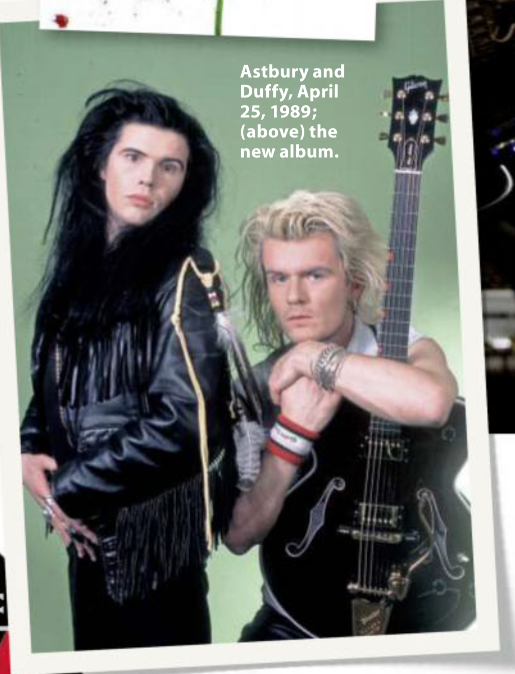
THE PALLADIUM
NOV 21 BIG SEAN
28 GTA
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS
11/20 THE CULT & PRIMAL SCREAM
7 PM
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS
Sunset & Vine

"We never felt part of a cabal… we're out here on the fringes": Ian Astbury (right) and Billy Duffy, Hollywood Palladium, California, November 20, 2015.

IT'S 1AM ON A FRIDAY NIGHT IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA. ON the street outside House Of Blues, The Cult's flight cases litter the pavement after a highly-charged show, and the engine of Ian Astbury's black Dodge Charger is purring, ready for the drive back to his home in Los Angeles. At the wheel, Astbury calls his wife. "Honey, I'll be there in two hours – don't wait up," he whispers lovingly, then chucks the phone on the dashboard, looks at MOJO mischievously, and declares, "Right, now we can go to the strip bar!"

In his late-1980s pomp, The Cult's mercurial singer may well have led us to a seedy lap-dancing establishment within five minutes. But that was then. Sober for 15 years, and married for three, he most definitely doesn't run like that any more. Yet, as we cruise up the deserted I-5 freeway, he proves to be no less of a handful on a conversational level. "I've just been re-reading your review of *Born Into This*," he says. That 2007 album was the first of three cut during The Cult's current lease of life. The review was resoundingly positive. "You were going on about, 'the self-styled Wolfchild, from Cheshire,'" Astbury simmers, "something about Hong Kong Phooey, dada-dah – all kind of minimising me." An uneasy silence descends, as he squeezes on the accelerator. Once the conversation resumes, the indomitable singer evangelises stirringly about everything that's fed into The Cult's spiritual progress. Instead of the well-worn 'factual' story of their initial rise and fall, we hear personal stories that hark back to his time as a wasted fan-boy, his first real glimpse of stardom at Live Aid, and, yes, recollections of the self-immolating Wolfchild, lost on the road in America.

At the heart of our conversation there's *Hidden City*, unequivocally the finest Cult record in a quarter century, a mature and exciting evolution on from their classic albums, *Love* ('85), *Electric* ('87) and *Sonic Temple* ('89). Lit up by full-blooded performances, Astbury's lyrics spookily presage the Bataclan killings in Paris, and the despair that has followed. Boyishly animated about his cultural infatuations, but witheringly catty about those that fall short, Astbury is ever the volatile, emotional interviewee. But, it must be said, a remarkably steady driver.



Astbury and Duffy, April 25, 1989; (above) the new album.

EARLIER IN THE EVENING, AT A live session for San Diego alt-rock radio, Astbury's spikiness is apparent. He, Cult co-pilot Billy Duffy and their latest LA-drilled rhythm section of John Tempesta (drums), Grant Fitzpatrick (bass) and Damon Fox (keys) are crammed into a tiny, sweaty studio. "It's like getting a ship in a bottle," grumbles the bearded guitarist.

In the '90s The Cult would routinely open tours in this city, due to the rabid welcome they received. With barely two hours until showtime at the House Of Blues, however, nerves are fraying, as Astbury is briefly interviewed by a senior jock from the Cult-supporting station, 91X. Asking about Dark Energy, the exhilarating lead track from *Hidden City*, the DJ bizarrely starts talking about Dark Entries by Bauhaus. Astbury flinches at the comparison. When the DJ winds up by reassuring listeners of The Cult's ongoing excellence, he acidly retorts, "Well, you always know what you're getting with me – Pete Murphy!"

Was it this punky, prickly side to his nature that scuppered his ascent on these shores the first time around? It's hard to tell. But Astbury's accepted CV reads thus: after starting out post-punk, he sold his soul for Stateside FM-rock adulation, only to lose himself, to quote one of his own lyrics, "trying to tame the American horse".

"ME AND BILLY, WE'RE LIKE THE LEVI'S LABEL – TWO HORSES PULLING A PAIR OF JEANS APART."
IAN ASTBURY

Beggars Banquet
THE CULT
SHE SELLS SANCTUARY

At 53, Astbury is anything but defeated. With his hair tied samurai-styled into ball at his crown, he has found a spiritual path that draws on Eastern theosophies. A dead hawk's wing feather dangles from the rear-view mirror of his Dodge, signifying his life-long identification with North America's indigenous tribes, and he talks of witnessing the Dalai Lama's three-day long oration at New York's Roseland Ballroom with awe. In the light of his extensive extra-curricular travels (in Tibet, the Himalayas, and beyond) in the 20 years since The Cult's first lifespan, the narrative of 'wide-eyed Northerner dreams of cracking America' obviously feels to him like a youthful folly – not to mention geographically inaccurate.

Born Ian Robert Astbury in Heswall, Cheshire, he only stayed in the north-west for six weeks before his father – an officer in the merchant navy – took the family to Glasgow, and then to Hamilton, Ontario. "I grew up 40 miles from the New York state border," he bristles. "All my information as a mid-teen came from New York City – the New York Dolls, Alice Cooper, Todd Rundgren, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop."

Arriving in Canada with a Scottish accent, he identified with other ostracised kids, but by the time he headed back to Glasgow in '79, aged 17, he was armed with "this Transatlantic drawl". Already rootless, an outsider wherever he went, he'd been tuning into UK punk, and now ploughed headlong into the scene. He devoutly followed anarcho-heroes Crass around the country. "There's a bit of the Forrest Gump about me," he grins. He recalls getting thrown out of The Birthday

Ships in a bottle: The Cult on San Diego radio, (clockwise from above) Duffy and Astbury; keyboardist Damon Fox and bassist Grant Fitzpatrick; drummer John Tempesta; (right) ready to take San Diego; (below right) Astbury smoking on the Live Aid couch flanked by Bob Geldof and Billy Connolly.

Party's dressing room – "no idea where" – for "being too degenerate. Nick Cave was like, 'Get this kid out of here!' I was on my knees, deifying him. Tracy Pew [BP bassist] let me stay, and gave me a bottle of vodka. Basically, I was a fan, and still am."

Unlike the majority of devotees, Astbury channelled his enthusiasm plausibly on-stage, first as Southern Death Cult's 'positive-punk' motormouth. After spotting Duffy in Theatre Of Hate, he dissolved his old band, and, by May '85, emerged from the soup of goth-era indie loserdom with She Sells Sanctuary – a bona-fide hit, built upon Duffy's soaring, uniquely flanged riff, and Astbury's mystical lyricism. Within weeks of its release, the upstart singer found himself personally invited to Live Aid, at Wembley.

"While Queen were on-stage," Astbury recalls, "I was sitting in a booth between Billy Connolly and Bob Geldof. Later on, I was standing next to Freddie Mercury and David Bowie, and they were speaking to me, maybe not as an equal, but in a way where they were inquisitive about me, and our music. I went back to Brixton on the tube that night. My mind was blown."

Right there, Astbury and his band stood at the portal to the higher kingdom. Even though they would tour as hard as anyone, and, in most bands' eyes, make enviable progress over the ensuing nine years, their outsider status and stubbornness remained intact.

In late '85, for instance, as the attendant *Love* album took off in America, Astbury was due to grace the cover of Rolling Stone alongside their US label boss, Seymour Stein. "It was like a fashion shoot," he recalls, "and when I saw the clothes, I said, I'm not wearing that stuff. I wasn't being an ass, I just didn't like the jacket. We kind of got banned from Rolling Stone after that."

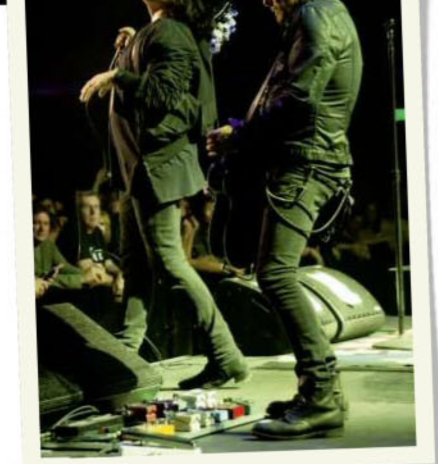
Astbury's permanent return to North America came when, obsessed with the Beastie Boys' 1986 album, *Licensed To Ill*, he took the band to New York to record *Electric* with its producer, Rick Rubin. Their resultant take on AC/DC's bare-bones riffola seemingly entitled Astbury to live the rock-star dream as Wolfchild, an alter ego coined in his lyrics for the track Wild Flower. "It was my persona for when I'd stepped over the line of making sensible choices" – for which, read: hard liquor, powder-format drugs, and fast women.

"You know," he reasons today, "The Cult cartoon, Wolfchild, 1987, Zodiac Mindwarp – we were kids, babies; 23, 24 years old. I'd already been through stuff – suicide attempts, my mother dying of cancer [when he was 17]. I was sitting reading X-Men comics in the studio, but I was also on the street – 8th Street, 6th Avenue – getting my hotel room broken into, getting into fights. I was up in it! I was up in the grease as well. I was discovering The Life."

Inevitably, Astbury plunged too deep into it. Excessive touring, losing his father while on the road, souring relationships with Duffy and his first wife, and flagging record sales, all added up to him walking out on The Cult two dates into a 1994 tour of the ➢

Piper Ferguson (4), Getty Images

THE CULT ◆ ELECTRIC
KING CONTRARY MAN ◆ LOVE REMOVAL MACHINE
BORN TO BE WILD ◆ OUTLAW ◆ MEMPHIS HIP SHAKE



Into the red: Ian Astbury on-stage in 2015; (below) Astbury and "I'm the riff guy" Billy Duffy; (inset) the Rick Rubin-produced *Electric*.

⩤ Americas. On a trip to Tibet in the early 2000's, he says he found his route out of the mire. "The first thing anyone said to me there was, 'Welcome home!' I just thought, Thank you, now I belong somewhere! And I never looked back."

It's been an emotional drive. As Astbury pulls up at MOJO's hotel on Sunset Strip, he gestures across the road. "I was up there with Michael Hutchence once – the St James Club," he says, forlornly, recalling a time in '97 when Astbury himself was at an all-time low. "I saw him the week before he died. We were really good mates. If only he could've abstracted beyond being caught up in what he was caught up in. He couldn't see a way out of it." He taps his hand on his heart. "I wish he could've got some of *this*, I'll tell you."

"THE BATACLAN HAD AN EFFECT ON US. I'VE PLAYED THERE FOUR TIMES. IT COULD HAVE BEEN OUR SHOW."
IAN ASTBURY

ON-STAGE BACK AT THE House Of Blues, you could hardly accuse Astbury of mellowing. Dark brown wavy hair tumbling down to his shoulders, he sings powerfully, passionately, and between songs galvanises a borderline-violent San Diego crowd. At one point, he surprises a bouncer at the stage lip and lectures him on his responsibilities.

To his right, Billy Duffy throws guitar hero shapes that are rare in this day and age. He and Astbury exchange neither words nor glances through the entire 90-minute set. The duo's sparring relationship is the stuff of legend. "Me and Billy, we're like the Levi's label – two horses pulling a pair of jeans apart," Astbury admits.

Backstage before the gig, Duffy puts it another way: "I'm not gonna get all mystical," he says, "but we're Taureans, so we're both very stubborn."

A year older than Astbury, William Henry Duffy is a man with straight answers to straight questions. A no-nonsense Manc, his punk credentials are immaculate. In late-summer '76, he saw the second of the Sex Pistols' two gigs at Manchester's Lesser Free Trade, thanks to Slaughter & The Dogs, the local band from his neighbourhood, Wythenshawe, who opened the bill.

While playing in Ed Banger & The Nosebleeds, his basic music taste – "The Stooges, New York Dolls, straightahead rock'n'roll" – was instilled in him by their singer, Morrissey. Around that time, he introduced Morrissey to Johnny Marr (with whom he remains close). After that route-one musical experience, Theatre Of Hate "was an eye-opener" – frontman Kirk Brandon teaching him more subtle, textural playing.

Once Brandon sacked him mid-tour, he took his skills into The Cult. She Sells Sanctuary, and the *Love* album, established Duffy's initial sound on his iconic, hollow-bodied Gretsch White Falcon guitar, but all that was to be reduced to a groin-thrusting riffola by Rick Rubin on *Electric*, whom he now affectionately describes as "the Pol Pot of production – it was all about space and minimalism."

For Duffy, The Cult's assault on America was unambiguous: it was "the Chisholm trail, the trodden path – The Who, the Stones, Zeppelin all came here." It was also the land of milk and honey, and he says he decided to move across the Atlantic, one rainy night in January '88.

"I was living in Chelsea in London," he recalls, "and it was cold and depressing, my football team were shit, my car had been clamped… I'd been hanging out with a little clique who'd go to the Limelight club – Lemmy, Steve Severin from the Banshees – that were into drugs. I was more into drink, but I got so bored, even I started doing drugs. I thought, I could be in California riding motorbikes with [Sex Pistols guitarist] Steve Jones, and having it large. It was that light-bulb moment."

Touring *Sonic Temple* took his interest in alcohol to the limit during what was a divisive time. "Me and Ian had become two separate camps. Ian was really into Keith Richards' X-pensive Winos. I was like, We just had our most successful record, why the fuck would we change anything? Then grunge happened, and changed everything anyway."

Since Astbury's departure in '94, the pair have twice come to the realisation that they can't do without each other. Nevertheless, Duffy describes writing songs together these days as "the same old dance".

"With us, two plus two equals five," he explains. "I could never imagine writing lyrics. I'm the riff guy, and that has a reasonable footprint in The Cult. It's a riff-orientated music we do, so it's always going to be a collaborative process. I want to say we're like the scorpion and the frog, but we need each other."

The light-bulb moment: Duffy, "havin' it large" with Steve Jones.

WHEN DUFFY AND ASTBURY reconvened last year to start work on *Hidden City*, the singer turned to "the riff guy" and declared "the first sound I hear is piano". As confrontational as this may seem, Astbury's approach stemmed from the time he spent assuming the mantle of Jim Morrison in Ray Manzarek and Robby Krieger's reviving roadshow, The Doors Of The 21st Century. Singing those iconic songs every night had, he says, a big impact on him. He recalls how, at the intro of The Crystal Ship, he'd lead off

Piper ferguson (3)

a cappella, soon to be joined by Manzarek's piano, then Krieger's acoustic. This approach is perhaps most evident on the six-minute, mini-epic, Birds Of Paradise, which is genuinely defined by light and shade. Nevertheless, *Hidden City* – the product of 18 months of songwriting – is still as massive a guitar record as you'll hear in 2016. Produced by Bob Rock (who helmed *Sonic Temple* and more recently worked on 2012's *Choice Of Weapon*), it is also more highly evolved than any record made by The Cult in the '80s.

"People go, 'Why don't you write *Electric* again?' Well, because I'm not 24 and havin' it – or at least, not the same way as I was then," nods Duffy. "It would be inauthentic."

The album's lyrical themes are profound. Its title came from Astbury watching Carlos Tevez score a goal for Juventus. In his celebration, he threw up his shirt, revealing the words, 'Ciudad Oculta' – 'hidden city' in Spanish, and also the name of the impoverished Buenos Aires neighbourhood in which Tevez was raised.

"Of course, it's got 'cult' in there," smiles Astbury, "and like me, Tevez never settles, he always wants to go home. I thought, Oh my God, it didn't say Adidas or Nike, or 'Buy my shit!' It said, 'Here I am on the world stage, and I'm thinking of my community'."

In certain songs, there's an elegiac mood, a mourning for the passing of emotional bonds, in favour of quick-fire information. The lead track, meanwhile, is apocalyptically urgent, pitting "tigers of wrath with dark energy" against a chorus which counters, "every soul alive burns bright in this life" – a lament, surely, for the victims of suicide bombings. More emotional still, Deeply Ordered Chaos finds Astbury pleading, "Defend Paris! […] Blood for holy water […] Syria the fall, weep for you."

Asked about these remarkably prescient words, Astbury becomes a little evasive. He says they were written in January 2015, when TV news was filled with the Charlie Hebdo killings. "I don't want to make it about us," he adds, gravely, "but of course the Bataclan had an effect on us. I've played there four times. It could easily have been our show, because that's our tribe of people. There were probably people who've been to a Cult show in that audience. We're still trying to put it all together."

Duffy, while clearly not undervaluing his cohort's visionary qualities, is a little more phlegmatic. "We did score a bit of a goal with War [from the album *Beyond Good And Evil*], which was released a month before 9/11," he says with a wry smile. "Maybe he manifests that shit. But there's a bit of a theme with Ian and Paris – the poet, the artist, the home of the lights, the city of light," he smiles. "It's a symbolism rather than the actuality of a baguette and a bit of fromage."

ASTBURY APPEARS INCANDESCENT AS HE surveys the 3,000-capacity crowd from the stage at the Los Angeles Palladium. The Dalai Lama's Ganden Phodrang HQ in Tibet not withstanding, this is a hometown gig: drawn to the city's esoteric culture, he's been living here on and off since the early '90s.

In stark contrast to San Diego, the Palladium is packed with impress-me scenesters, waving iPhones. "If you want a YouTube show, it's right up the street," Astbury warns one heckler, before providing him with a lesson in the city's heritage that takes in English-born author Christopher Isherwood and Aldous Huxley's postwar pursuit of 'spiritual technologies'.

Faced with an electrifying show, the stiff audience loosens up in the end, when The Cult are joined first by Alice In Chains' Jerry Cantrell, and then a bespectacled Steve Jones for a crunching Love Removal Machine. Backstage afterwards, the singer is in high spirits and apologises for putting MOJO on the spot about that old review a day earlier. "I love Hong Kong Phooey," he says, and to prove it, sings the theme tune, and busts a few kung fu moves around the dressing room.

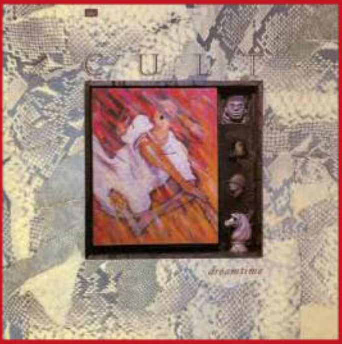
As Duffy makes a quiet exit with his significant other, AJ Celi, we're left with Astbury and his wife, Aimee Nash, whom he married in Vegas three years ago. Astbury met Nash, the singer in gothy Tom Waits-inspired duo The Black Ryder, when the two shared a bill in her native Australia in May 2010. His two sons by a previous relationship, Dustyn, 22, and Che, 19, are in Oregon – "both creative, both blazing their own trails". Here in LA, he finally has "a home, a hearth, with Ms Aimee".

If Astbury finally appears to be enjoying a sense of belonging, the same is not true of the band he leads. "We never felt like we were part of a cabal," Astbury summarises. "I'd been indoctrinated into this thing, like, 'You're next, career-wise', but I always felt like an outsider – like, we don't belong with you guys. We're out here, on the fringes, doing the work we do. And that's not just 'duuh, nana-nuuh'" (*hums the immortal Wild Flower riff*) "which is fun, and we still throw it down. It should be all things…" He searches for a word. "It's a bouillabaisse! (*Strikes tough gangster pose*) It's a boo-ya-base, baby!"

And with that, he scampers off into the warm Californian night, with his contradictions and his wife.

STATIONS OF THE CULT

THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF IAN ASTBURY AND BILLY DUFFY.



DREAMTIME

(Beggars Banquet, 1984)

A hugely assured debut, *Dreamtime* is epic in sound and bold in lyrical ambition. Astbury's fascination with Native American culture is evident on tracks such as Horse Nation and Spiritwalker (inspired by a prayer song and Buffy Sainte-Marie's 1976 track, Starwalker), while Duffy's guitar sounds oceanic throughout.

THE
CULT
LOVE

LOVE

(Beggars Banquet, 1985)

Preceded by the single She Sells Sanctuary, The Cult's second album saw Duffy's guitar sound expand further while the band delivered a selection of truly anthemic material (Rain and Nirvana remain setlist staples). If the hooks were sharper, the band's psychedelic adventurism was at its peak.

THE
CULT
ELECTRIC

ELECTRIC

(Beggars Banquet, 1987)

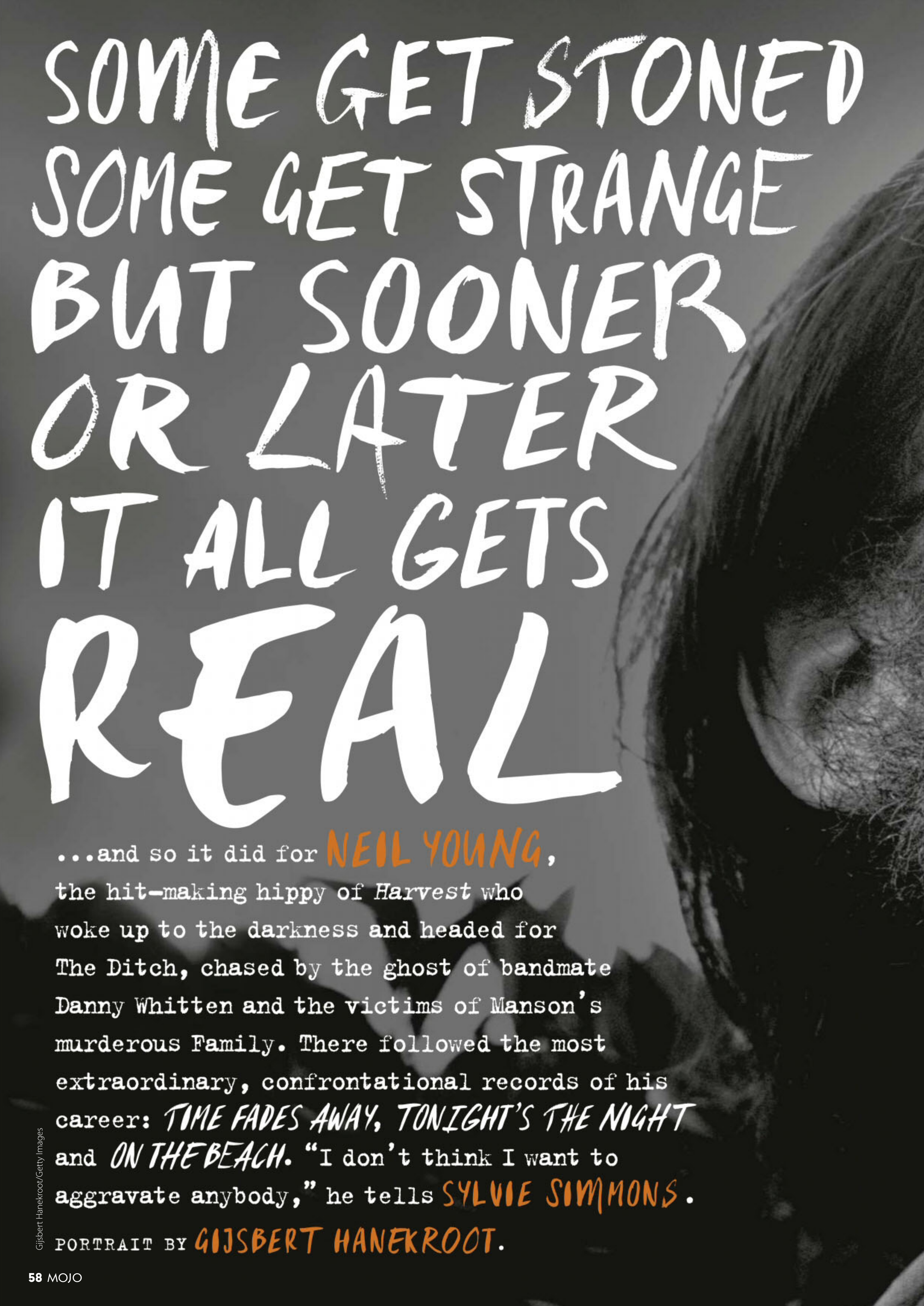
Electric still divides opinion among Cult fans due to Rick Rubin's dry-as-a-bone production. The material such as Lil' Devil and Wild Flower boast echoes of the past, but the thump of Love Removal Machine underlines the manner in which band's own sound was subsumed as they created their bridgehead into America.

THE CULT
SONIC TEMPLE

SONIC TEMPLE

(Beggars Banquet, 1989)

With rising Canadian producer Bob Rock (fresh from working with Led Zep clones Kingdom Come), The Cult's fourth album added an FM-friendly sheen to the scope of earlier recordings. Iggy Pop sang backing vocals on New York City as *ST* sold a million in the US.



Gijsbert Hanekroot/Getty Images

SOME GET STONED SOME GET STRANGE BUT SOONER OR LATER IT ALL GETS REAL

...and so it did for NEIL YOUNG, the hit-making hippy of *Harvest* who woke up to the darkness and headed for The Ditch, chased by the ghost of bandmate Danny Whitten and the victims of Manson's murderous Family. There followed the most extraordinary, confrontational records of his career: *TIME FADES AWAY*, *TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT* and *ON THE BEACH*. "I don't think I want to aggravate anybody," he tells SYLVIE SIMMONS.

PORTRAIT BY GIJSBERT HANEKROOT.

AN EXCHANGE WITH NEIL YOUNG...

MOJO: You were quoted saying, when your movie Journey Through The Past came out, "I sometimes like aggravating people with what I do."

NY: I don't think I want to aggravate anybody, but I do like to challenge my audience, if possible. Give them something that they haven't had before.

MOJO: Throughout your career you've seemed to consistently demolish your own history – and then rebuild it with such care.

NY: Hmm.

MOJO: Is it to stay ahead of the game? Keep yourself interested?

NY: I think it's just my nature to do that. It's always the next thing with me. I really don't like to be in a box. Although I'll end up in a box...

NEIL YOUNG
TIME FADES AWAY
ON THE BEACH
NEIL YOUNG
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

In the first half of the 1970s, Neil Young released three albums in succession that were the darkest of his career. Artistically you might call it his Black Period; mostly they're called the Ditch Trilogy, referring to Young's linernotes to his *Decade* compilation (1977) about how he found himself in the middle of the road, judged it a boring way to travel, and "headed for the ditch". They came on the heels of *Harvest* (1972) – not just Young's biggest-seller but the biggest-selling album that year. Millions now identified him as a mellow country-rocker. Meaning *Time Fades Away*, *On The Beach* and *Tonight's The Night*, with their ragged sound and weird, rambling lyrics were received by casual fans and critics as insanity, and by hardcore fans and critics as the Tao of Neil, the path into his psyche.

Young was in his twenties but he'd done about everything a long-haired singer-songwriter of that age and era could have hoped for. He'd played Woodstock and Altamont, folk clubs and stadiums. He'd owned a house in Topanga Canyon where, when he came back from the road, his wife Susan Acevedo and her daughter were waiting; and he'd upgraded his domestic situation to a ranch on 140 acres in the Santa Cruz mountains, shared with his new woman, actress Carrie Snodgress, and their baby Zeke. "New mama's got a sun in her eyes/No clouds are in my changing skies." An idyllic scene: Neil was in love; Carrie, the muse for A Man Needs A Maid, was taking the job in real life, saying she'd put her career on hold to take care of Neil and Zeke, who no one then knew had cerebral palsy. And *Harvest* was making a fortune: quadruple-platinum in the US, triple-platinum UK. It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.

"I'm just like everybody else, trying to figure out how it all goes together, or even if it does go together. Maybe it doesn't. Fine, too."

IT WAS IN A HOLLYWOOD CLUB IN 1967 that Neil Young met Jack Nitzsche. A composer, musician, arranger and producer, Phil Spector's right-hand man, Nitzsche was as intense as Neil and as maverick as Neil planned on being. They became close friends instantly, which is how it seems to work with Neil. Nitzsche worked on the arrangement for Young's Buffalo Springfield song, Expecting To Fly, and when Young went solo, Nitzsche came with him. *Neil Young* (1968), Young said, "was basically Jack and me," describing him as "one of the modern-day masters, his creations are on a par with Mozart." At one point Young shared a house with Nitzsche. Then he bought his own house in Topanga Canyon because he wanted "something solid".

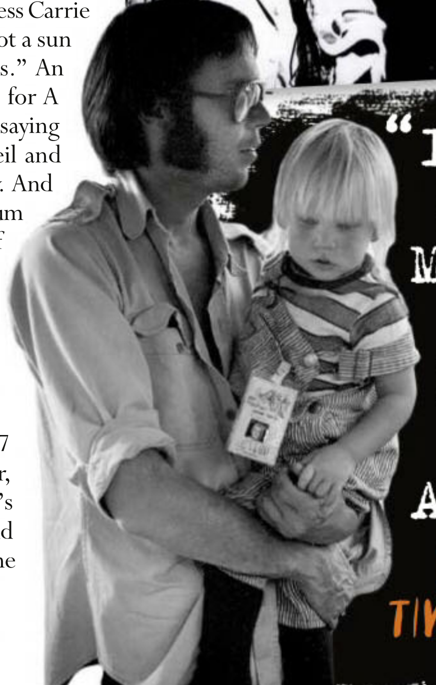
He chose Topanga over Laurel Canyon because it was cheaper and also more remote from the Strip where the scene was becoming dislocated and crazy. "Everything started to go too fucking fast," Neil said, "I needed more space."

Twenty miles west of Hollywood, Topanga felt like the outback. It was rustic and pretty wild. People rode horses or motorcycles – Neil chose motorcycles – since roads would just disappear, which Neil also liked, as it kept people away. Since it also kept out cops, it attracted an interesting population. Among Young's neighbours were actor Dean Stockwell, artist Wallace Berman, Spirit, Taj Mahal, Canned Heat, and a handful of people who, like Nitzsche, would play various parts in the Ditch trilogy: record producer David Briggs, guitarist Nils Lofgren, and psychopath Charles Manson.

Young met Briggs while hitchhiking in the canyon. Briggs picked him up in his old army truck and Neil had another instant friend. The producer was one of those intense, almost dangerous types Young had always been drawn to, as opinionated and out-there as Nitzsche. And he was of the same mind as Neil when it came to recording: elemental rather than perfect; capturing the moment. Very soon they were working together.

In December 1968 Neil married Acevedo, whom he'd met at one of the main Canyon hang-outs, the Moon Fire Inn. Neil had always had a thing about waitresses and Susan, better still, ran the place. She and her young daughter moved into the two-storey redwood house he was fixing up. There were dogs, cats, a goat and a studio in the basement. Here Young did a lot of the work on *After The Gold Rush*, an album inspired by Dean Stockwell's script for a film he would never make. Briggs produced it, Nils Lofgren and Nitzsche played on it, as did ➢

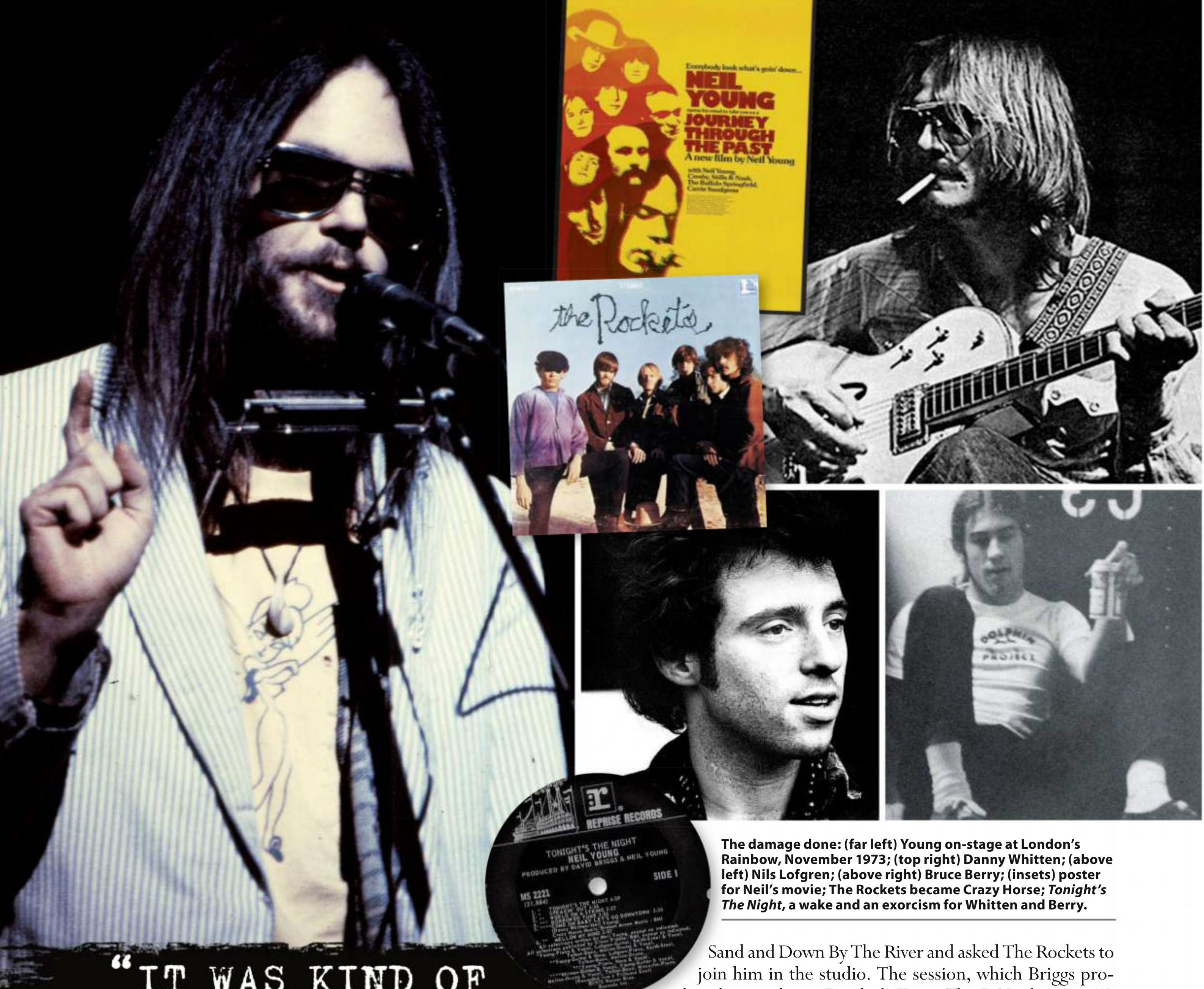
Getty Images, Photoshot



"I HAD THIS BAND OF ALL-STAR MUSICIANS THAT COULDN'T EVEN LOOK AT EACH OTHER. IT WAS A TOTAL JOKE."

NEIL YOUNG ON THE TIME FADES AWAY TOUR

"It's always the next thing with me." Neil Young at the Hammersmith Odeon, March 28, 1976; (insets opposite, from top) the 'Ditch' trilogy; Young and daughter Amber, Oakland Coliseum, July 13, 1974.


Everybody look what's goin' down...
NEIL YOUNG
JOURNEY THROUGH THE PAST
A new film by Neil Young
with Neil Young, Crosby, Stills & Nash, The Buffalo Springfield, Carrie Snodgress
the Rockets
REPRISE RECORDS
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT
NEIL YOUNG
PRODUCED BY DAVID BRIGGS & NEIL YOUNG
SIDE 1
MS 2221

The damage done: (far left) Young on-stage at London's Rainbow, November 1973; (top right) Danny Whitten; (above left) Nils Lofgren; (above right) Bruce Berry; (insets) poster for Neil's movie; The Rockets became Crazy Horse; *Tonight's The Night*, a wake and an exorcism for Whitten and Berry.

> "IT WAS KIND OF DARK. THE AUDIENCE WAS FREAKING OUT THAT NEIL WOULDN'T PLAY ANY OF HIS OLD HITS."
>
> NILS LOFGREN ON TOURING TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

≺ Crazy Horse: Ralph Molina, Billy Talbot and Danny Whitten.

Whitten, two years older than Young, was born in Georgia, raised on doo wop. He joined the navy at 17, was discharged with health problems and at 18 moved to Los Angeles. There he met Ralph Molina, a New York Puerto Rican, and formed a couple of bands that fell apart over time, before solidifying as The Rockets, with Molina's friend from New York, Billy Talbot. They were playing the Whisky when Young met and sat in with them in 1968.

Asked what he heard in the band that drew him, Neil replied it had nothing to do with hearing, it was "feeling" their "vibe", the ease they had with each other, no ego problems, they just loved playing – unlike the Springfield, which he'd experienced, and CSNY, which he would experience soon. When he came back from his solo tour, stuck at home with the flu, he wrote Cowgirl In The Sand and Down By The River and asked The Rockets to join him in the studio. The session, which Briggs produced, turned into *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (1969) credited to Neil Young And Crazy Horse.

"I probably didn't steal them," Neil said years later. "But that's the hardest part, the guilt at the trail of destruction I left." Following his tour with CSNY – a whole other story – and on the eve of the release of *Déjà Vu*, Young went on the road with Crazy Horse and Nitzsche. Whitten had been introduced to heroin by then and was happy to make its acquaintance. He was wasted on-stage and in the dressing room afterwards Neil bawled everyone out, trying to find out who had supplied him. But everyone was protective of Whitten – particularly Neil. Young would admit that Whitten's rhythms and instinctive, adventurous style of guitar playing were a big influence on him, and his singing too. Danny became his sidekick, which might have been a bad thing as much as good. It kept him in the background, which was a safe place to nod out, but not a good place for a singer-songwriter-guitar player to shine.

In 1971 Crazy Horse recorded their self-titled debut. It included classic Whitten songs like Downtown and I Don't Want To Talk About It. But he was so out of it the band made him go to a methadone clinic. He switched heroin for valium and alcohol in gargantuan amounts. "He was like really far gone," said Molina. "Finally Billy and Jack said, 'Well it's up to Ralph' – I mean we grew up together, me and Danny. Finally I said, We can't do it any more, Danny, which was really hard to do."

Danny was fired. Lofgren invited him to join Grin, but also had to send him home – which was mostly friends' couches until they kicked him out too for doing what junkies do.

Neil, meanwhile, was in great physical pain. Added to the almost Old Testament trials that would keep smiting him out of the blue

Getty Images (2), 1001-songs.blogspot.co.uk (2), Alamy

(polio, epilepsy) was a messed-up spine. Slipping a disc while working on the house didn't help. Still, in early '71 he packed his acoustic guitar and a traction machine and went to play a few shows. In Nashville, to appear on The Johnny Cash Show, he met studio owner Elliot Mazer and accepted his offer to record the new songs he'd been writing. Mazer brought in Nashville players like drummer Kenny Buttrey and bassist Tim Drummond, and Drummond introduced Neil to a pedal steel player, Ben Keith – all fated to join the Ditch charabanc.

Out of the sessions (with the addition of tracks recorded in London with Nitzsche and the LSO and a harrowing, solo Needle And The Damage Done recorded live with Briggs) came *Harvest*, released in February 1972 and welcomed – by the public, not the press – as a laidback classic. Young had been flat on his back when he wrote it, sometimes under heavy sedation, and propped up on a stool in a body brace to record. Record buyers took this as mellowness. There's a melancholy to the album too, a sense of things being lost or going wrong. But thanks to his Number 1 hit Heart Of Gold, he was now an endearing hippy icon. "I thought the record was good," he told Rolling Stone in 1975. "But I also know that something was dying."

> *"I've often been singled out for extreme things to happen in my life."*

BY NOVEMBER 1972, YOUNG HAD LEFT Acevedo and Topanga ("too many weirdos," said the singer, although Manson was incarcerated by then) and moved actress Carrie Snodgress into his ranch, Broken Arrow, in the hills south of San Francisco. Their son Zeke was two months old, and Young was rehearsing for the Harvest tour. Nitzsche was there – in fact, living with his family in one of the buildings on the ranch. Neil liked Jack because Jack was always honest with him, to the point of unpleasantness. Ben Keith and Kenny Buttrey were there too, and Danny Whitten was on his way. He turned up tanked on valium and tequila. Rehearsals were a nightmare. Nitzsche told Neil the hard truth, that Whitten couldn't play for shit, but Neil continued to support Danny, teaching him his parts separately.

But this was the biggest tour of Young's career and there was no room for passengers. So Neil fired Danny – gave him $50 and an airline ticket to LA. That same night, November 18, 1972, Whitten overdosed and died, aged 29. Police found Young's phone number in his pocket. The day after receiving that terrible call, Young wrote Don't Be Denied, a look-back on his life that ends with self-disgust and disillusion. "Well, all that glitters isn't gold… I'm a pauper in a naked disguise/A millionaire through a businessman's eyes." He told MOJO: "Any friend that you have that's as close as Danny, it would be a traumatic experience."

The darkness didn't let up. Back in rehearsals, the band squabbled over money, starting with Kenny Buttrey, who demanded $100,000 to play the tour. Nitzsche found out and insisted they *all* get $100,000. It was not a fun jaunt. Young, trying to isolate himself from the bad vibes, stayed on a different hotel floor to the rest of the band and if he talked to them it was only to bark at them about what they should and shouldn't do. Buttrey quit. He was replaced by John Barbata, who'd played with CSNY.

While they were out, Warners released the soundtrack to Neil's weird movie *Journey Through The Past*: outtakes, a few live cuts and one new song, Soldier. It wasn't Young's idea to release it then, but Warners insisted, if he wanted them to back the film. Critics reviewed the album as the follow up to *Harvest*. They were not good reviews.

Young was drinking heavily and his nerves were shot. Towards the end of the tour he lost his voice. Crosby and Nash stepped in to help out for a few weeks, though they weren't in the best of emotional health – Nash's girlfriend had been killed by her brother in a drugs-related episode and Crosby was dealing with a dying mother and an insatiable appetite for cocaine. At an arena show in Oakland, the crowd rushed the stage during Southern Man and a policeman started beating on them. Neil and the band packed it in and left. The crowd threw bottles. A few days later the tour was over.

The tour was recorded for a live album, *Time Fades Away* (1973). It was ramshackle and raw, sloppy and gleeful and entirely lacking in *Harvest* fireside glow. Also, unlike most live albums, there were no familiar songs. It opened with a long, ragged, rowdy country number with strange lyrics about presidents, greed, wasted lives, 14 junkies, a soldier, a diamond seller and a parent trying to keep a son on the straight and narrow. Neil sounded like he was plastered, or channelling Dylan. On Yonder Stands The Sinner he was a hillbilly preacher backed by a barroom band beating out Stonesy 12-bar blues. There were haunting piano ballads – Love In Mind, The Bridge, Journey Through The Past – a lengthy Don't Be Denied and, by the closing number, Last Dance, chaos.

Young called it the worst record he ever made, but an honest picture of where things were at. "I felt like a product," he said. He hated playing in venues where he couldn't see the audience and he hated being part of the music biz circus. "I had this band of all-star musicians that couldn't even look at each other. It was a total joke." That was The Ditch Trilogy Part One.

AFTER THE TOUR, YOUNG LEFT FOR Hawaii and Crosby, Stills and Nash, the plan being to write songs for a new album. While there they received news that CSNY roadie Bruce Berry had OD'ed on heroin.

With recording relocated to Broken Arrow, Young visited David Briggs. He told him he was on the way to a CSNY session but didn't feel like it: "Let's make some rock'n'roll." They summoned Ben Keith, Nils Lofgren and Ralph and Billy from Crazy Horse, booked Sunset Sound studio in Los Angeles and started recording, but the formal ambience impaired the looseness they sought, so they moved to S.I.R, a couple of blocks east down Sunset Boulevard, where Berry had worked. Briggs parked a truck full of equipment in the alleyway behind the rehearsal room, and with the studio's permission, punched a big hole through the outer wall to feed the cables through. And they started recording *Tonight's The Night*.

The band played on the rehearsal stage like a gig with an audience of ghosts, Briggs running back and forth between the room and the truck. Sometimes people would drop by, like Joni Mitchell, or drummer Bruce Gary. "The room was the size of a small nightclub," Gary recalled, "with couches on one end of the room and the stage on the other. The sessions lasted two to three days. ➢

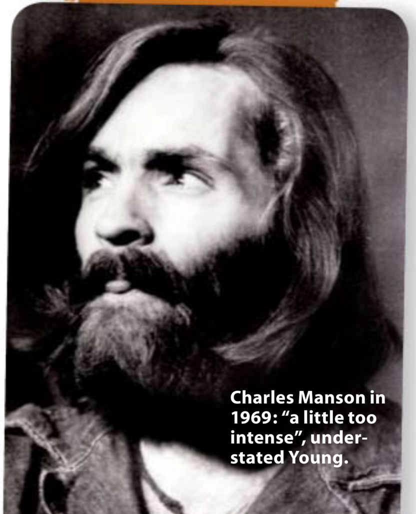
FAMILY AFFAIR

CHARLES MANSON and NEIL YOUNG: A Dance Of Death.

AFTER HIS release in 1967 from another of his many stretches in prison, Cincinnati-born Charles Milles Maddox – aka Manson – decamped to San Francisco, where he learned steel guitar from bank robber Alvin Karpis and gathered a flock of mostly young female drifters, over whom he appeared to exert a powerful quasi-religious, political and sexual fascination.

From there, Manson relocated his so-called Family to Topanga Canyon. To its tolerant outsiders and freaks he was just another guy with a guitar and problems with the law. Young said he first met Manson at Dennis Wilson's place in Pacific Palisades; Wilson knew him through a couple of the Family girls, Patricia Krenwinkel and Ella Jo Bailey, whom he'd picked up hitch-hiking.

They seemed to get along, Manson and Young – hung out a little and played some guitar. Manson was "unreal", Neil said, "Very special but very wild." He liked the way Manson would "make up the songs as he went along". Apparently he was a good Dylan impersonator, too, and Neil spoke to his record company chief, Warners' Mo Ostin, about signing him, though warning Ostin that Manson was "a little too intense". Too intense for Neil in the end. He dropped him way before the Family's murder spree in the summer of 1969. Convicted with three others in January, 1971, Manson left behind a thick layer of paranoia that sat like smog over the rock and movie community, an atmosphere that would be reflected in Young's Ditch albums and addresses specifically in *On The Beach*'s Revolution Blues.



Charles Manson in 1969: "a little too intense", understated Young.

Taking a back seat: Neil Young, June 17, 1975, around the time of the release of *Tonight's The Night*; (below) *On The Beach* poster and vinyl.

> "THE VIBE WAS AS SPOOKY AS THE ALBUM SOUNDS. IT WAS *VERY* LOUD. I HUNG OUT UNTIL I COULDN,T TAKE IT ANY MORE."
>
> BRUCE GARY ON MAKING OF TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

ON THE BEACH
NEIL YOUNG
REPRISE RECORDS
ON THE BEACH
NEIL YOUNG
R 2180
SIDE II
ON THE BEACH
MOTION PICTURES
AMBULANCE BLUES

< I remember thinking that it was a strange decision to record there. This was a rehearsal hall and there were many other bands rehearsing at the time and the walls were not completely soundproof. There was a lot of booze consumed. The vibe was as spooky as the album sounds. It was *very* loud. I hung out until I couldn't take it any more."

Neil and the band, way out there on Cuervo Gold tequila, just played and played. Some songs were already written, or part-written – like Tired Eyes: "Well he shot four men in a cocaine deal, left 'em lying in an open field full of old cars with bullet holes in the mirrors. He tried to do his best but he could not." Others were improvised, like Roll Another Number. "I'm a million miles away from that helicopter day," Neil sings, referring to Woodstock. The hippy dream was over. Whitten's death, he said in a 1983 interview, felt like "the price tag [for] the freedom of the '60s and free love and drugs and everything."

The band were given no chance to rehearse; Neil wanted them "wide open". "The emotion was just dripping," said Ralph Molina. "And Neil was so into it, we were all into it, it was like a family thing. It was great."

Said Lofgren: "Even though it was a dark record with a lot of frustration and anger, rather than sit around and mope about Danny's and Bruce Berry's deaths we purged ourselves by making that album. I think in a strange way we had a case of the fuck-its. We'd show up at S.I.R at 5 or 6pm and my recollection is that we just played pool, partied, commiserated – it wasn't that morose – and we'd jam, play and record in this very bare-bones fashion. I remember Ralph and I constantly asking Neil if we could fix this or that little part and he'd say no, he wanted it just as it was. Neil was clear that his intent was to let people see how a record is before it gets polished."

Neil said, "Sometimes I'd be on the mike, sometimes I'd be two feet off it. The whole thing was live. I didn't feel that laidback so I thought I'd just forget about all that and wipe it out and be as aggressive and abrasive as I could."

AFTER FINISHING THE ALBUM AND BEFORE releasing it, they took the show on the road. "Welcome to Miami Beach, ladies and gentlemen," Neil would announce. "Everything is cheaper than it looks." Particularly the music business. Young's crazy circus exposed the sickness and fakery of the whole deal – glitter platform boots, plastic palm tree, seersucker sports coat and gallon jugs of Cuervo Gold. He shared with the audience his recipe for honey-slides, cooked marijuana that could lay a person out worse than junk.

Sometimes he'd verbally abuse the audience – some critics said he abused them musically too. Neil himself thought the UK tour was "fabulous, one of my best ever". Said Lofgren: "The tour was a concept, like the record. We basically performed the entire record, starting and ending with *Tonight's The Night*. There was all kinds of crazy stuff going on on-stage. Throughout the tour I'd wear these heavy combat boots and ankle weights, because the music was so slow and plodding that I needed them to sink down into the groove of the songs. It was kind of dark but I was having a ball. The audience in general was freaking out that Neil wouldn't play any of his old hits. One night he came storming out and launched, without telling us, into a 15-minute, searing version of Down By The River,

Henry Diltz, Michael O'Brien

which was basically Neil's way of saying, 'Is that what you want?'"

Young announced *Tonight's The Night*'s release date as January 1974. But the date came and went – apparently, mixing was problematic. Besides, he was recording new songs with Briggs, Ben Keith and Ralph Molina. Keith, by now part of Neil's inner core of friends, brought in Rick Danko, Levon Helm and Rusty Kershaw, an eccentric Louisianan whose father had shot himself and who'd played guitar in a band with his mum and brother since he was 10. Young borrowed Tim Drummond from a Graham Nash session – Nash and Crosby would make guest appearances, too. They redecorated Sunset Sound with rugs and old furniture found in thrift shops, turned the lights out and lit a box of candles. There were honey-slides, Cuervo Gold and a doctor administering potent Vitamin B12 shots. The album they were recording was *On The Beach*.

Neil was spending a lot of time in Malibu now that his relationship with Snodgress was as good as over and his ranch was overrun by her weird friends. It was Topanga all over again, with the added paranoia of his suspicion that Snodgress had been cheating on him, which she denied. "I hear that Laurel Canyon is full of famous stars/ I hate them worse than lepers and I'll kill them in their cars," Neil sang in Revolution Blues, adopting Charles Manson's persona for the song and sounding dangerously comfortable in it. Could he get any further from "I wanna live, I wanna give/I crossed an ocean for a heart of gold"?

"It's a pretty dark record," Neil admitted, but "not as dark as *Tonight's The Night*. It was very mellow, very down. Good album. One side of it particularly, the side with Ambulance Blues, Motion Pictures and On The Beach." The lyrics of Motion Pictures, dedicated to Snodgress, contained some hope, but for him, not for her. "I'm deep inside myself but I'll get out somehow", and the way he planned to do that, the album seems to say, is to distance himself from the rock'n'roll excess that detracted from the art and brought so much death.

As to the title track… "I always feel bad I stole that melody from Bert Jansch," he told Jimmy McDonough – Jansch's Needle Of Death, a big favourite of Neil's. (Decades later Young and Jansch would play it together at Neil's Bridge School concert.) "The world is turning, I hope it don't turn away," Neil sings, equal parts intimate and fatalistic, haunted and haunting.

The front cover photo was shot on a cloudy day at the beach: cheap patio furniture, cheaper beer can, the fin from an old Cadillac, the palm tree from the tour, a newspaper headlining the Nixon scandal, and Neil in the tacky sports coat. He has his back to us, looking out to sea. There's an air of anxiety to the picture as well as absurdity – maybe he'll walk into the ocean and not turn back; maybe it's all a joke. A bleak album in many ways but full of vivid imagery, cohesive, deep and often absolutely beautiful. It was released in July 1974.

The split with Carrie was final. Neil sent his mum to Broken Arrow to have her clear out her stuff. Back at the ranch, alone, he wrote a pile of break-up songs and then he went on the road with CSNY – that 1974 tour was recorded for a live album but not released until last year because of Young's veto (see MOJO 250). In November he was back in Elliot Mazer's studio in Nashville, working on an album called *Homegrown*. He recorded a couple of the Carrie songs – Separate Ways and Love Is A Road – duetted with Robbie Robertson on a song called White Line and went back to LA to finish it. Largely acoustic, it was a personal album, so personal it scared him. "I think I'd be too embarrassed to put them out," he said.

So he didn't. He released *Tonight's The Night*. The weird raps and intros and cussing and knocking over of mikes had been erased, but it was otherwise intact, wrapped in a sleeve that felt like blotting paper, linernotes written in Dutch on a folded piece of paper, a small bag of glitter dust and a note from Neil: "This album was made for Danny Whitten and Bruce Berry, who lived and died for rock'n'roll." Released in June 1975, the final part of the Ditch trilogy was a wake and an exorcism and a middle finger raised to the music business and the fans who thought they knew him. And was brilliant.

THE POWER OF 3

Five more rock trilogies.

blur MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH
blur The Great Escape
blur
PARKLIFE

BLUR

'Life Trilogy'

Modern Life Is Rubbish (1993)
Parklife (1994)
The Great Escape (1995)

Trilogy? Rather: Albarn's post-rationalisation of three albums that sounded rather similar, with snarky third-person pen-portraits (Colin Zeal, Tracy Jacks, Ernold Same) and knees-up social comment evoking Anglo-pop precedents (Kinks, Specials). Ended when Blur renounced Britpop and embraced US indie scuzz.

DAVID BOWIE LOW
CARD
David Bowie

DAVID BOWIE

'Berlin Trilogy'

Low (1977)
"Heroes" (1977)
Lodger (1979)

It began in France at the 'Honky Chateau' but no matter: this was Bowie's bunker period, rebuilding his health and exploring electronica with Visconti and Eno. *Low* and *"Heroes"* were mirror albums, with largely instrumental side twos; *Lodger* is their schizo avant-world-pop sibling.

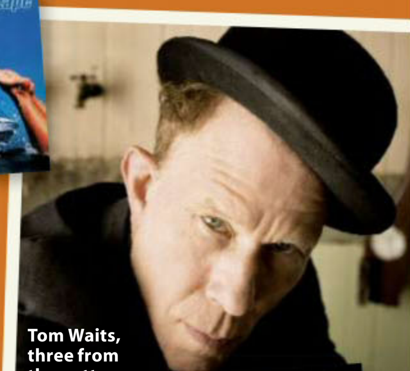
GONG
GONG ANGELS EGG

GONG

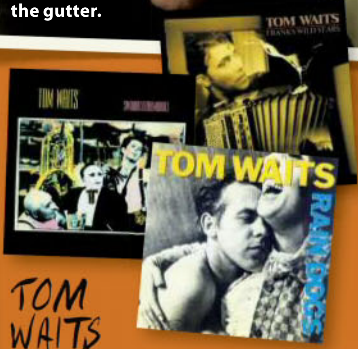
'Radio Gnome Trilogy'

Flying Teapot (1973)
Angel's Egg (1973)
You (1974)

Daevid Allen's acid vision of musical salvation and extra-terrestrial benevolence matches Lear-like lyricism with increasingly sophisticated music, the adventurism of jazz underpinning the psychedelic and progressive tendencies of the communal band. At their core, all three albums offer anarchic lessons in positivity.



Tom Waits, three from the gutter.



TOM WAITS

'Gutter Trilogy'

Swordfishtrombones (1983)
Rain Dogs (1985)
Franks Wild Years (1987)

We've made up the name of this Trilogy (anyone do better?) but the themes and soundworlds make these an obvious troika. Gutbucket blues, Brecht-Weill, improvised percussion, strep-throat barking and hobo romances combine in three of the greatest albums of th '80

EELS
HOMBRE LOBO
EELS END TIMES

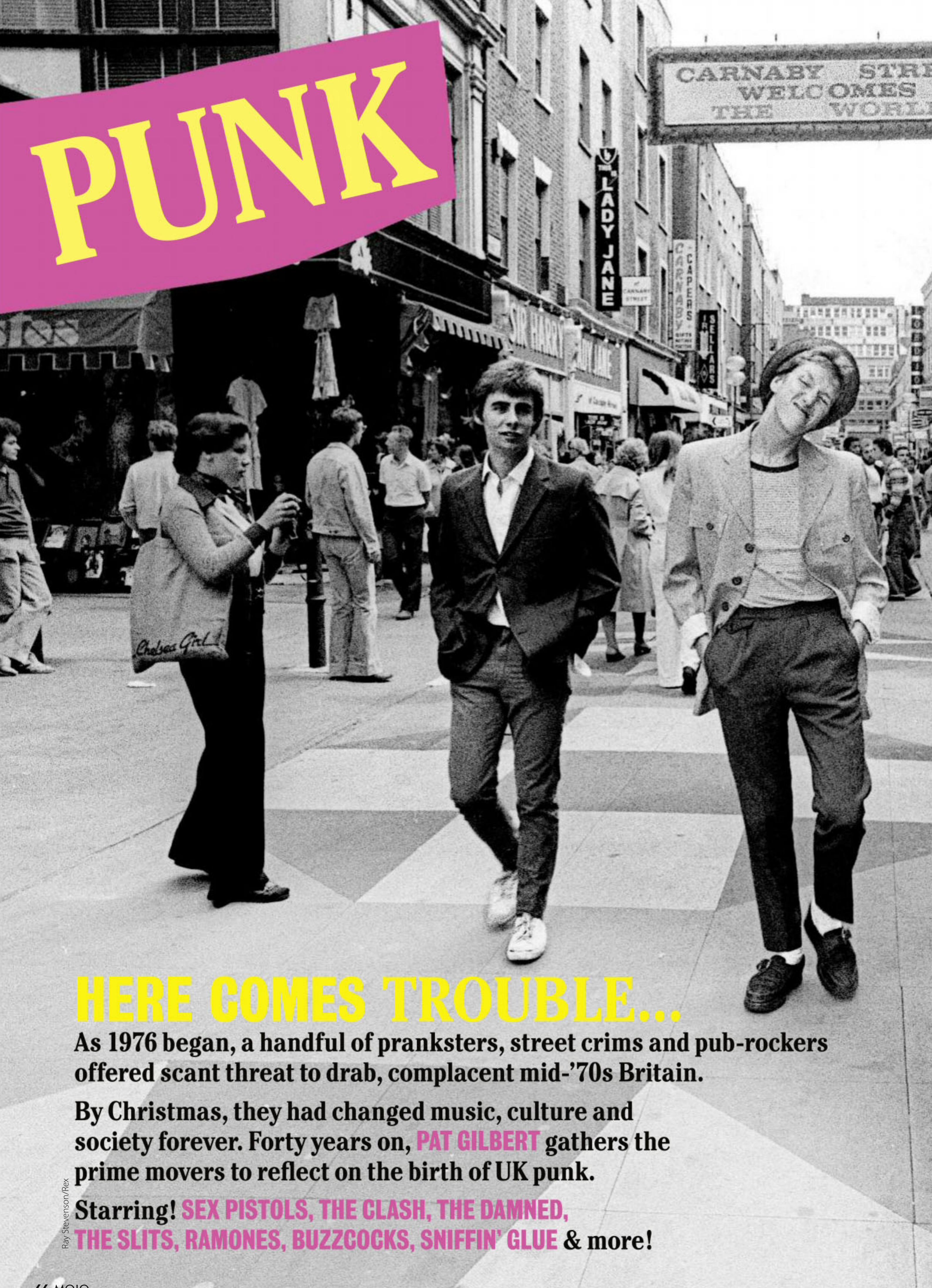
EELS

'Concept Album Trilogy'

Hombre Lobo (2009)
End Times (2010)
Tomorrow Morning (2010)

Mark Oliver Everett's triptych of consecutive relationship albums: stark, febrile *Hombre Lobo* all about the hots (Tremendous Dynamite is scuzzily lust-ridden); stark, miserable *End Times* is lost love and its aftershocks; stark but twinkly *Tomorrow Morning* sees light at the end of the tunnel.

Eels' Mark Oliver Everett sees light at the end of the tunnel.


CARNABY STR
WELCOMES
THE WORL
LADY JANE
CARNABY CAPERS
SIR HARRY
Chelsea Girl

PUNK

HERE COMES TROUBLE...

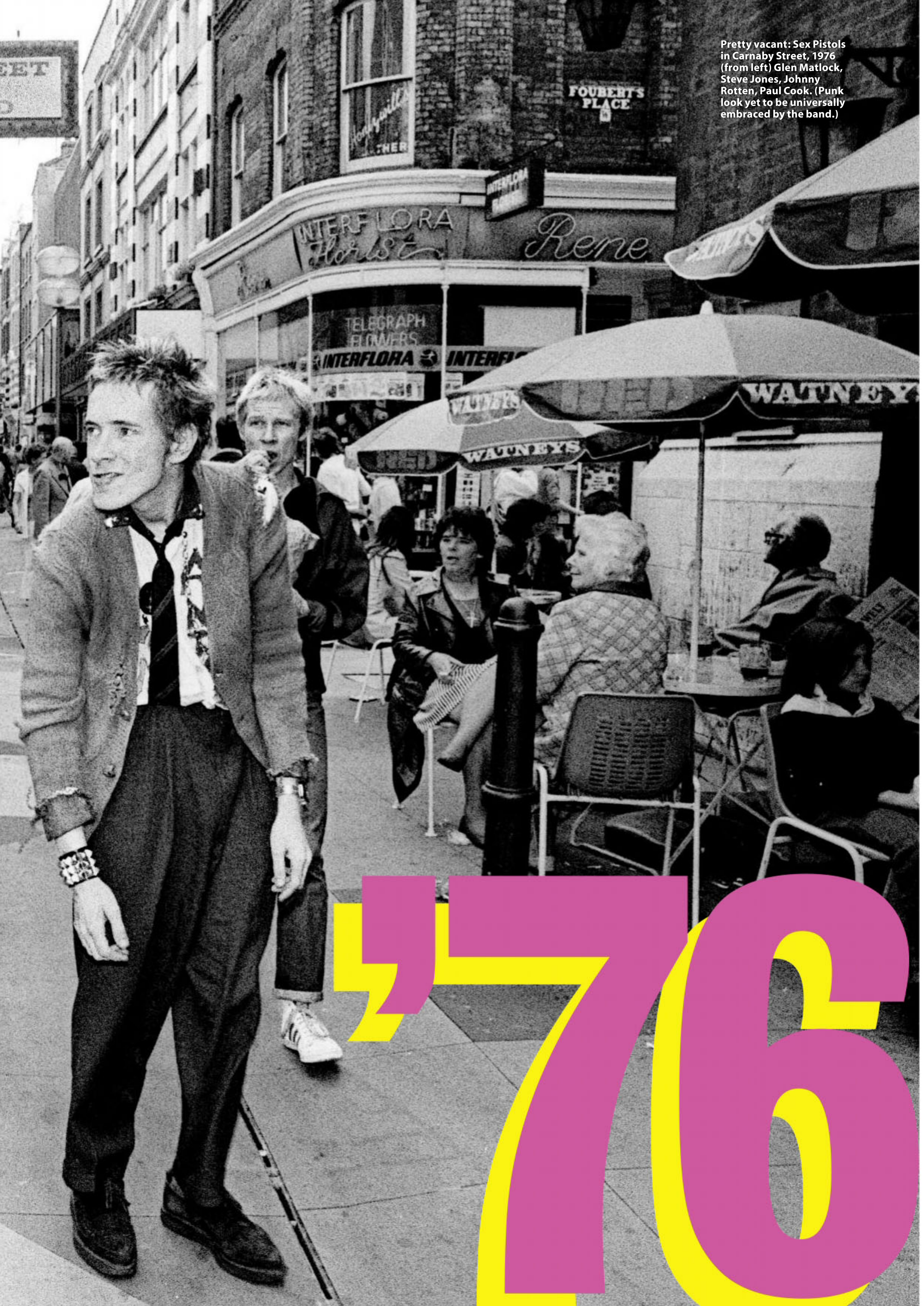
As 1976 began, a handful of pranksters, street crims and pub-rockers offered scant threat to drab, complacent mid-'70s Britain.

By Christmas, they had changed music, culture and society forever. Forty years on, PAT GILBERT gathers the prime movers to reflect on the birth of UK punk.

Starring! SEX PISTOLS, THE CLASH, THE DAMNED, THE SLITS, RAMONES, BUZZCOCKS, SNIFFIN' GLUE & more!

Ray Stevenson/Rex

'76


FOUBERT'S PLACE
INTERFLORA Florist
Rene
TELEGRAPH FLOWERS
INTERFLORA
WATNEYS

Pretty vacant: Sex Pistols in Carnaby Street, 1976 (from left) Glen Matlock, Steve Jones, Johnny Rotten, Paul Cook. (Punk look yet to be universally embraced by the band.)

JANUARY ...SEX PISTOLS PLAY THEIR EIGHTH SHOW

SITUATION VACANT

1976 starts pregnant with provocation for rock's new *bêtes noires.* "The first thing I thought was, He's trouble," **GLEN MATLOCK** tells **PAT GILBERT**.

Vive le Rock!
Little Richard

FOR THE SEX PISTOLS, 1976, THE YEAR in which they'd originate English punk and redefine pop music's possibilities, began surprisingly quietly. Their only live appearance in January was at a Friday night student disco in Watford on Friday 23, which apparently passed without incident. The lack of drama was noteworthy: eight gigs into their career the group were already synonymous with disruption and disorder. The pattern had been set at their very first public appearance, at St Martin's College of Art on November 6, 1975, when a fight broke out after headliners Bazooka Joe pulled the plug on them mid-set. The hostilities, it transpires, had nothing to do with the Pistols' then novel cropped hair, lairy Mod rock or eccentric fetish-shop attire.

"We thought they didn't like us because they had a north London sub-rockabilly mentality, and things were quite tribal back then," says bassist Glen Matlock today. "But [Bazookas frontman] Danny Kleinman told me recently it was because they saw Rotten kicking their PA, which they hadn't even paid for yet as it was bought on hire purchase (*laughs*). That's why they got arsey with us."

Though it was their ability to express something deeply truthful about the grey and grotty mid '70s that would be the Pistols' making, it was the irreverence of Rotten and his extraordinary bandmates that first captivated observers. The group had started in late 1974, when art student Glen Matlock, then working as a Saturday boy at Malcolm McLaren's King's Road boutique Let It Rock, was asked to keep an eye on two local tearaways who'd regularly visit the shop. But Steve Jones and Paul Cook weren't just interested in pilfering clothes; they also had a group. Invited to a rehearsal/audition at their singer-friend Wally Nightingale's home in East Acton, Matlock threw himself into a spirited version of the Faces' Three Button Hand Me Down on his makeshift guitar-cum-bass.

"They said, 'You're in – for now,'" he recalls. "We all loved the Faces, and I was doing my Ronnie Lane bit. Then they reached under the bed and said, 'Yours isn't a bass, but this is…' and out came a brand-spanking-new Fender Precision. I said, Where did that come from? They said, 'Don't ask.' Then Wally tried to sell me a suit like the one Bowie wore on the cover of *Pin-Ups*; it turned out they'd just stolen it from [designer Tommy Roberts'] City Lights shop in Covent Garden."

By spring 1975, the group were rehearsing at the abandoned Riverside Studios complex in Hammersmith, which Wally's electrician father, who was also writing lyrics for the group, had the contract to strip out. Matlock was impressed to learn the top-quality gear they used had been lifted from, among other places, Bowie's Hammersmith Odeon gigs. Around this time the bassist discovered Jones had 'interesting' sexual impulses and, for a laugh, got off on watching a couple having sex in an adjacent lane. When the lovers called the police, the stash at Riverside had to be moved; soon after, the ill-fitting Wally went too.

"WE WANTED TO BE A ROCK'N'ROLL BAND, AND HAD SOMETHING TO BACK IT UP WITH." **GLEN MATLOCK**

MCLAREN WAS BY NOW TO AND FROING from America, where he was managing one-time Let It Rock customers the New York Dolls. On return visits to London, he began taking an interest in the emergent, soon-to-be Pistols. "We were the youngest of the young people in the shop, we wanted to be a rock'n'roll band, and had something to back it up with," explains Matlock. "Paul was

DECCA
45 RPM
F.11937
DON'T GIMME NO LIP CHILD
DAVE BERRY
PYE
45RPM
7N.17125
THE KINKS
I'M NOT LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE

WATFORD COLLEGE UNION presents
SEX PISTOLS
+ DISCO
FRIDAY 23 JANUARY
7.30 pm
in the Bar ~ Common Room
Only 30 pence!

Camera Press

a great drummer, I was pretty good on bass by then, and Steve was coming on really well as a guitarist. I think Malcolm spotted an opportunity at home; he gave Steve [NYD guitarist] Sylvain Sylvain's white Les Paul as a present."

McLaren's influence on punk was immeasurable, from the Let It Rock/SEX emporium's status as nexus of the embryonic scene to his management of the Pistols in their anarchic pomp. His friend and later Clash mentor, Bernard Rhodes, nurtured the group in the crucial period during his absences. "Bernard would hang out with us a lot then, and get us to qualify what we were thinking about," says the bassist. "We'd check out bands together, look for singers and young, like-minded people. We went to see one group called The Teenage Rebels at a place called the Torrington, and Bernard got quite angry. He said to them, 'You're not teenagers and you're certainly not rebellious.' And the bloke said, 'That's the point. We're rebelling *against* teenagers.' Bernard was, for once, speechless."

In August 1975 Rhodes clocked the green-haired John Lydon wandering along the King's Road in his customised I Hate Pink Floyd T-shirt. His originality and edge, he decided, were the perfect ingredients to complement the rough-diamond Cook/Jones axis and Matlock's natural musicality. "The first thing I thought was, He's trouble, and I was right," says the bassist. "But it was in a good way, at first. Even though he couldn't sing in the accepted sense, there was something about the way he took the piss out of the scenario when he auditioned to the jukebox [in SEX]… Steve, Paul and me had a cocksure attitude, but we couldn't put it into words. But he could. He had the gift of the gab."

With Lydon contributing lyrics and an outsider, immigrant-Irish mindset, the Pistols soon had the originals – Did You No Wrong, Pretty Vacant and Submission – to add to a set of covers including The Who's Substitute, the Small Faces' Whatcha Gonna Do About It and Understanding, Dave Berry's Don't Give Me No Lip Child and The Kinks' I'm Not Like Everybody Else.

That October, there was an abortive search for a second guitarist that almost snagged a Pre-Raphaelite-looking Mick Jones (Matlock: "Malcolm warned us, 'He could be like Samson – if you cut off his hair he might lose all his strength'") and Glen's future bandmate in The Rich Kids, Steve New ("His hair was also too long, and he was only 16"). But by early November 1975, the Pistols as we'd know them, provocatively dressed in McLaren and Westwood's SEX fetish wear and old Let It Rock Teddy Boy gear, were ready to do battle.

"The Sex Pistols wouldn't have been the Sex Pistols if it wasn't for us finding John," concludes Matlock. "But it wouldn't be the Pistols without me, either – or Steve, or Paul. It was just one of those rare combinations in music that produce something really interesting. And it's still getting talked about 40 years later."

Storm warning: Sex Pistols on-stage in London, 1976 (from left) Glen Matlock, Johnny Rotten and Steve Jones; (insets from top) '70s badge; Dave Berry and Kinks 45s covered by the band; their sole January '76 booking, only 30p!

FEBRUARY ...BUZZCOCKS' SEX PISTOLS PILGRIMAGE

LOOK WHO'S STALKING!

The Pistols' siren call was spreading outside SW10, luring two would-be punks from the North. "They were exactly the band we wanted to create," explains PETE SHELLEY.

I WAS A PART-TIME STUDENT AT BOLTON INSTITUTE OF Technology and had already been writing songs with a fellow student called Howard Trafford. We were in a coffee bar on February 19, 1976, and Howard remembers me flicking through the NME and finding the review of the Sex Pistols at the Marquee, the one where Steve Jones said they were into "chaos", not music. I was drawn to it because of the strange name and the fact they did a Stooges cover.

That weekend, it just so happened that a woman who lived in the same house as Howard was going away for the weekend, and said we could use her car. So we decided to drive down to Reading to stay with our friend [and later Buzzcocks manager and New Hormones label boss] Richard Boon, and find out if the Pistols were playing in London. It was a madcap thing to do. Howard wasn't a very confident driver, so instead of going on the motorway, we went on the A and B roads, so we didn't arrive until four in the morning.

The next day, we bought a copy of Time Out and there was no mention of the Sex Pistols, so someone suggested we phone the NME. The person who answered said the band's manager had a clothes shop on the King's Road, so we got the tube to Sloane Square. When we went in, Malcolm was a bit cagey, but said the band were playing that weekend at High Wycombe [on Friday] and [Saturday] Welwyn Garden City.

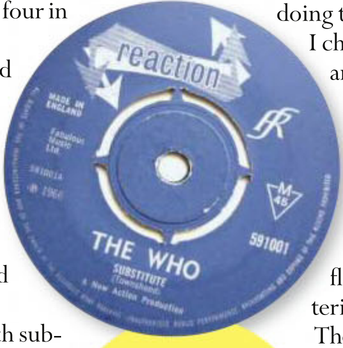
The High Wycombe gig was in a student bar, with subsidised beer and a Friday night crowd. The Sex Pistols came on, and the funny thing was, they were exactly the kind of band that Howard and I wanted to create. It was anti what rock had become and harked back to the excitement you got from '60s groups like The Kinks and The Troggs. They played covers – The Who, The Monkees, Small Faces, but I also remember Submission, Pretty Vacant, I'm A Lazy Sod [Seventeen]. There were no unnecessary 20-minute guitar solos, just very direct, in-your-face, take-no-prisoners rock music.

The band reportedly had a scuffle with Screaming Lord Sutch's Savages, but I don't remember seeing any fight, though we did notice that someone had smashed the window of their van. It was all a bit of a blur. On the Saturday, in Welwyn Garden City, I remember John complaining that he had a cold. He was spitting a lot and was sick on-stage. It was a completely different dynamic to anything else about then. In those days, at gigs people would still sit on the floor.

After the show, we talked a bit to Malcolm, who was saying he wanted to get some gigs north of Watford. So we told him we'd use our contacts to try to get them a gig in Manchester or Bolton. The group weren't infamous at the time, so they talked to us, too, no airs or graces. They were surprised we'd come all the way from Manchester to see them.

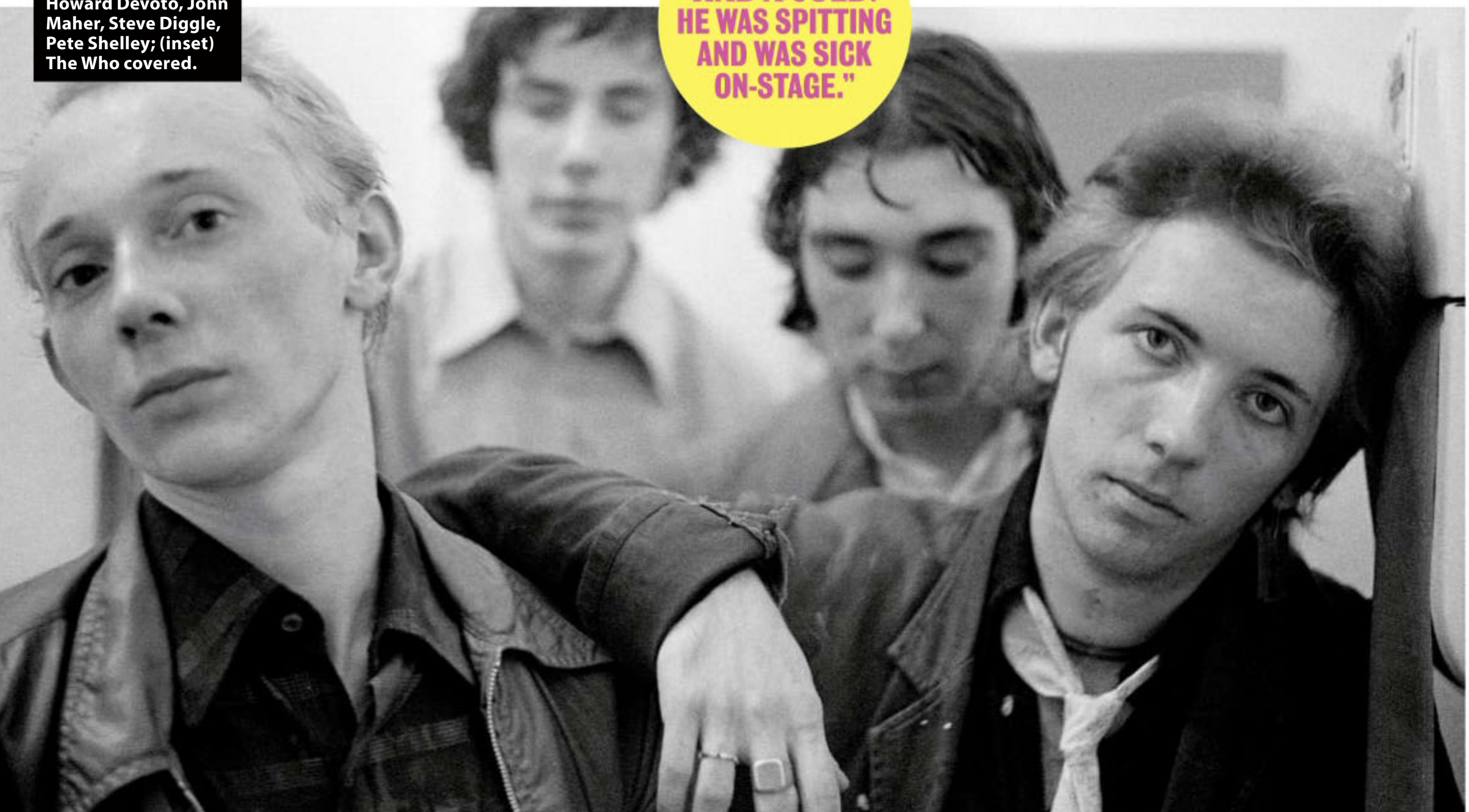
When we got home, we felt inspired to get a band together, and things moved really quickly. From reading the review in the NME to doing the Buzzcocks' first gig, in Bolton, was only six weeks. I changed my name to Pete Shelley [from Peter McNeish] and me and Howard [now Devoto] started to make our own T-shirts. There wasn't anywhere to buy clothes like the Pistols' in Manchester. In fact, Howard saw some trousers he wanted to buy for the gigs we arranged for the Pistols at Manchester's Lesser Free Trade Hall [on June 4 and July 20]. He went into the shop and said, "Can you take them in?", as they were flares. They explained they'd have to cut away some material, so they'd be ruined. They thought he was mad.

The great thing about punk was you didn't need to spend thousands on equipment or spend months rehearsing. The Pistols gave people the impetus to just go out and do it.



"ROTTEN HAD A COLD. HE WAS SPITTING AND WAS SICK ON-STAGE."

Long-distance punks: Buzzcocks (from left) Howard Devoto, John Maher, Steve Diggle, Pete Shelley; (inset) The Who covered.



OKAY!
fontana
DAVE DEE, DOZY, BEAKY, MICK AND TICH
HE'S A RAVER
fontana
45
MONO
A
HOLD TIGHT!
DAVE DEE, DOZY, BEAKY, MICK AND TICH

Glen Matlock (left) and Johnny Rotten share the mike in '76; (inset) the Pistols covered *one* of these Dave Dee singles.

Kevin Cummins/Getty Images, Rex Features

MARCH

...PISTOLS CRACK AT THE 100 CLUB

NEVER MIND THE FRACAS

The Pistols' first 100 Club gig was almost their last, as participants and bystanders remember.

Glen Matlock: The 100 Club was where I had the ruck with John. There was no fucker there. We were always looking at cool covers to do. And we liked the Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick And Tich song, He's A Raver, or was it Hold Tight? John didn't really want to do it. Then we did Pretty Vacant, and I changed the words to "You're a right cunt", and he said, "Do you want a fight?" I said, "Not now, we're doing a gig." So he went off and Malcolm found him waiting for the 73 bus. He apparently said, "If you don't go back on stage you're out of the band." Not that it mattered, 'cos no one was there. I thought all this was normal. I'd never been in a band before.

The fractiousness had started before when Malcolm sent us up for a double session with [singing coach] Tona de Brett in Hampstead. I was singing something and she told John to shut up, "because you're spoiling it" (*laughs*). But I always got on with John until he got his face in the papers.

John and I were like chalk and cheese. I stayed round his mum's flat once, you don't do that if you're not mates.

Chris Spedding (guitarist, Womble, future Pistols facilitator): Malcolm invited me to the 100 Club. We went down there together and that was where we first saw them. I can't remember if he'd told me about them before. That was the gig when Rotten and Matlock had an argument on-stage and Rotten ran off. I remember Malcolm saying, "Get back on stage, boy, or I won't give you the cab fare home." You'd think knowing what we do about him, Rotten would have said, "Fuck off!" But he got back on stage, probably because he wanted his cab fare home!

"JOHN SAID, 'DO YOU WANT A FIGHT?' I SAID, 'NOT NOW, WE'RE DOING A GIG.'" GLEN MATLOCK

John Lydon: Glen was the – quote – musician of the band and his approach was, "You can't do that, that's not music!" "*Pardon*?"

Right from the start there was an argument with him because he wanted us to be these dandies, these Soho ponces, a throwback to the Mods. That was never going to work, so I laughed that one right out of court.

Over the years there's been plenty to be bitter and twisted about between me and Glen, but I don't want it to be that way because actually I really like Glen. No, I do! Sometimes. He just wants a happy world where everybody gets on. Unfortunately for us, that happy world would be according to his rules, and that's unacceptable. [With my lyrics] Glen's approach was "It doesn't fit the pattern of the music. You're one beat off." In your mind, you'd be thinking, "Yeah and you're one off a beating too!" But we never had any violence between us. There was pushing and shoving, but never anything brutal and nasty.

APRIL

...STRUMMER'S 101'ERS CUT KEYS TO YOUR HEART

SOUNDS FROM THE STREET

London's grass-roots rock'n'roll scene primed the powder for the punk explosion, explains Chiswick /Rock On's **ROGER ARMSTRONG**.

TED CARROLL AND I RAN THE ROCK ON shop in Camden, which also had a stall in Soho market. We'd been to the Sex Pistols' [debut] gig at St Martin's, because we knew Malcolm McLaren. Ted had sold him some of the records he put on the jukebox in his shop – probably ones the Pistols covered, like (I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone and Whatcha Gonna Do About It. I remember a few college students at St Martin's didn't like them. Someone threw a can, Johnny threw it back, there was a scuffle, it was all very handbags. We were amused more than anything. It didn't feel like a threat to civilisation.

COLGEMS
The Monkees
I'M A BELIEVER
(I'm Not Your) STEPPIN' STONE
SMALL FACES
DECCA
WATCHA GONNA DO ABOUT IT
WHAT'S A MATTER BABY
TRACK 1
JUNGLE ROCK
HANK MIZELL
CS 1005
45 RPM
Charly
Side One
Records

The spirit of rock'n'roll [in the mid '70s] never really went away, it just went underground. There was a very active Teddy Boy scene in London, with pubs like the White Hart in Tottenham and big events with DJs at the Lyceum. If you went into the White Hart and they didn't know you, you'd get your head kicked in. It was dangerous, very tribal. Ted and I were safe, because we were the guys who sold them the records; [ace scenester] Sunglasses Ron would come over to show the Teddy Boys we were OK.

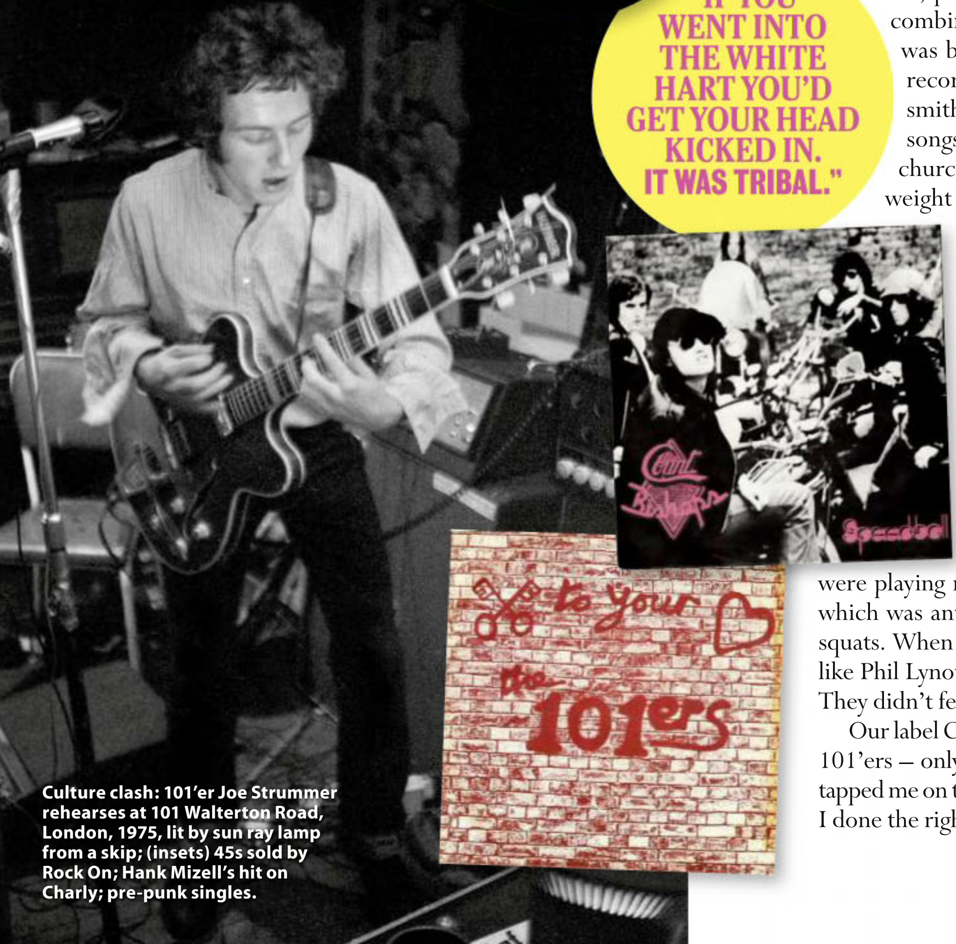
The big change at that time was that rockabilly had crept in, because people in the UK had access to these records in a way they hadn't before. Facsimiles were being pressed in the States, which is how people got to hear stuff like Hank Mizell's Jungle Rock [a hit in 1976 on the Charly label]. At the same time, this generation of younger kids, who had seen [George Lucas's 1973 film] American Graffiti, were joining the scene. They had bomber jackets, flat-top haircuts and rolled-up jeans, rather than the quiffs and the old-fashioned drapes. Kids like [future actor] Jesse Birdsall. Some of them used to come into the shop and ask if you had any 'Graffiti music', they didn't know terms like 'rock'n'roll' or 'rockabilly'.

I always had ambitions to release records, so Ted and I talked about it. We were selling lots of Stooges, MC5 and New York Dolls LPs, but there was this other thing happening in London at the time, pub rock, which we loved. Beer and music, a great combination! It was different from rock'n'roll, because it was based on R&B, and instead of copying the original records slavishly, bands like Dr. Feelgood, The Hammersmith Gorillas and The Count Bishops revved up the old songs and did their own thing with them. It was a broad church: bands like Brinsley Schwarz were much lighterweight and had a country rock influence. But The Count Bishops, who became our first release [1975's Speedball EP], were really powerful; and the Feelgoods were totally awe-inspiring live. Both those groups had real edge and attitude. I guess the key difference with punk bands was they asserted their Englishness. It wasn't all about American R&B anymore; they were covering people like the Small Faces and The Who.

> "IF YOU WENT INTO THE WHITE HART YOU'D GET YOUR HEAD KICKED IN. IT WAS TRIBAL."

Another scene that rarely gets a mention is what I call the 'aggressive hippies' – that's exactly what they were. It was that Ladbroke Grove crowd like The Pink Fairies, Hawkwind, Motörhead. They were playing rock'n'roll but with a bad attitude all of their own, which was anti-hippy, despite the emphasis on free festivals and squats. When the Roxy club got going [see p85] you'd see people like Phil Lynott and Lemmy propped up on the bar. They loved it. They didn't feel threatened, they just thought it was great.

Our label Chiswick's third release was Keys To Your Heart by The 101'ers – only just before it came out, their singer Joe Strummer tapped me on the shoulder in the Windsor Castle pub and said, "Have I done the right thing?" He'd jumped ship to a different band...



Culture clash: 101'er Joe Strummer rehearses at 101 Walterton Road, London, 1975, lit by sun ray lamp from a skip; (insets) 45s sold by Rock On; Hank Mizell's hit on Charly; pre-punk singles.

Julian Yewdall, Rex Features, Getty Images

CHRIS SPEDDING
RAK
MOTOR BIKIN'

(Main image) Chris Spedding (second right) and the Pistols, Majestic studios, '76; (above) RAK man Mickie Most and Spedding's hit 45.

MAY

...THE SEX PISTOLS MAKE A DEMO

WHITE PUNKS ON TAPE!

What happened when Johnny & Co met a Motor Bikin' Womble. By **CHRIS SPEDDING**.

I'D KNOWN MALCOLM McLAREN SINCE ABOUT 1974, when Let It Rock was selling retro '50s stuff. He invited me down to see the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club, the gig when Rotten and Matlock had the argument on-stage [see p71]. I was the guy who was the well-known pop star at the time (*laughs*), as I'd had a hit the previous year with Motor Bikin', so all the punks were a bit cheeky. It was like, "You're famous, buy us a drink…" "What you having?" "Champagne."

I totally got it when I saw them. Lydon's stage persona, his physical presence, was impressive. I thought, "Yes, this is what we need," though I didn't go in for the anarchy thing – I was 30 at the time. I was just pleased there were some young musicians out there that could really play. After, Malcolm asked me to record some demos. I was suspicious he was trying to use me, but didn't mind. I'd been successful in the business, I thought, "If the guys need help, I'll give it to them." But Malcolm seemed out to take advantage, my instinct was to stay clear of him; Vivienne, on the other hand, I always thought was quite cool.

I knew Majestic studios in Clapham, because I'd played guitar on Brian Eno's *Here Come The Warm Jets* album there. It was a cheap 16-track, but very good and near to where I lived in Wimbledon. On the day [Sunday, May 16], I made sure Malcolm came with cash to pay the studio, as I thought he might saddle me with the bill. They all turned up at 11am, on time, and were as good as gold. Malcolm was a bit bossy; at one point I said, "Steve, can you tune your guitar," and McLaren leapt in and said, "Yeah, Steve, make sure your guitar is in tune!" I was like, "Steady on, Malcolm, he's quite capable of tuning his guitar when I tell him." Steve used my guitar amp, so there wouldn't be any nasty buzzes or hums, and Glen played through an Ampeg amp, to get that punchy bass sound.

I thought they'd be a bit green and nervous, so I used some psychology. I told the engineer not to put the red light on when we were recording; if they didn't think they were playing for real, you'd get a more relaxed take. I said, "Can we run through to check the sound?" and that got us exactly what we wanted [Problems, No Feelings and Pretty Vacant]. They were a little surprised when I said, "That's it." I don't think they understood what I was up to. We'd mixed it and were all done by 5pm.

Because we were so quick, I think they thought I'd done a hatchet job on them, which is why they later went into the studio with [their soundman] Dave Goodman. He would do take after take until they were exhausted, which is how *not* to record a group. I employed the old-school method, which Chris Thomas would also use. Plus, I mixed the bass and bass drum up loud, because I liked that Motown approach, but the band weren't so keen. They came to my house after with a copy of the Ramones' first album, and said, "We want it to sound like this." I said, "You guys are far better than that! Your rhythm section is far more interesting." But clearly they wanted to go in a different direction.

> "I WAS SIGNED TO RAK, SO I TOOK THE TAPES TO MICKIE MOST. HE DIDN'T LIKE IT."

Because I was signed to RAK, I took the tapes to [label boss] Mickie Most. He didn't like it; but Calvin Hayes, his son, who was only about 13 at the time and went on to be in Johnny Hates Jazz, loved it. They had a big argument! But there was no way that Malcolm would have done business with Mickie Most; they would have known exactly what the other was up to. Mickie wasn't someone you could rip off; he'd been round the block too many times.

After that, I took the tapes to Chris Thomas, who I worked with a lot – I used to be his first call for a [session] guitarist. That's where the rumour that I played on the Sex Pistols' records came from. But Steve Jones was more than capable. The direction Chris Thomas would take with the band wasn't the one I would have – but that's what became the Pistols' sound.

Power surge: The Clash, Chalk Farm, 1976 (from left) Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, Joe Strummer; (insets, from top) Bernard Rhodes keeps abreast of Tory press on the Anarchy tour; The Clash on-stage with drummer Terry Chimes and (far right) Keith Levene.

JUNE

..JOE STRUMMER COMPLETES THE CLASH

REBEL ALLIANCE

CBS
the CLASH
S CBS 5058
STEREO
1977
(Strummer/Jones)
Produced by Micky Foote
Original sound recording made by CBS Records
MADE IN ENGLAND

English punk co-architect **BERNARD RHODES** on spiting Malcolm McLaren and forging punk's political vanguard.

I WAS WORKING IN THE SHOP WITH Vivienne when Malcolm was away in America [in early-mid 1975], and thievery was a big thing then. Steve and Paul would come in, trying to nick stuff; then they started bringing in stolen equipment, amps and guitars, which they wanted me to sell for them. I'm from the street, I'm practical, so I said, "I know you like music, why don't you play these fucking things instead?" I used to go down to the place they rehearsed [Riverside studios] and knock about with them; I even helped with some arrangements, because they wanted to sound like the Faces, and rant like Iggy, but I wanted it to be different.

I was living in Camden at the time, and Steve Jones would roll up at 11 at night in a stolen Bentley and go, "Coming out for a ride, then?" They'd want to go dancing down Hammersmith Palais, with all the working-class kids with nice clothes on. It was good fun; I got caught up in it all.

We were getting on great, then Malcolm came back. He took me aside and said, "Bernard, stay away from this." He kicked me in the balls, basically. So I thought, "You fuck me over, I'll fuck *you* over."

They were on the look-out for a singer. Richard Hell was considered, there were auditions behind my back. So I thought, "I'll find someone who'll really fuck Malcolm over." I found this guy, John [Lydon], he was a right pest, he had the "I hate Pink Floyd" T-shirt. The only thing was, he hadn't done anything before and I knew the others wouldn't accept him. He wasn't like Steve or Paul or Glen, he was totally different. He was a bit scruffy – he didn't wear nice working-class outfits and go

"MICK JONES HAD BEEN SCREWED OVER. HE WANTED TO PROVE HIMSELF."

Camera Press/Steve Emberton, Rex

out dancing. So I took care of it, I worked quite closely with him.

I took [John] to the shop and got him to audition to the jukebox. Then we went to the Roebuck [pub], and did some more talking. The funny thing was Vivienne loved him! I couldn't believe it. Steve and Paul were still sniffing around him, like animals, 'cos he wasn't like them. Then Malcolm took over; which is why I did [The Clash].

Don't get me wrong, Malcolm had a terrific personality, he was a very clever guy and we shared lots of great times together, but his philosophy and mine are completely different. His was 'bad behaviour is good', which was highly entertaining at times, often reckless and, in some cases, fatal. He persuaded people to go to extremes to fulfil his need for danger. But I couldn't fuck about with stuff like that: I was from the street, I was practical, and more political.

MY IDEA WAS [TO CREATE SOMEthing] to be like a power surge, to represent the audience and the group as one. I wasn't interested in the old rock format, that hierarchy where the group were gods. That's why I gave the The Clash that line, "No Elvis, Beatles or The Rolling Stones in 1977", even though I knew they liked those groups – you needed to sacrifice some stuff to get to a certain point. I thought it would be more like a political party; we could solve people's problems and the audience could relate to us like that. I didn't like the New York Dolls' [idea of punk], it was like Marc Bolan to me; I was more interested in the street radical stuff.

What did I see in Mick Jones [the first recruit in late-1975 to proto-Clash outfit the London SS]? At first I didn't want to work with him, I needed some persuading, so I sent him over to see Malcolm. Malcolm phoned me up and said, "Who was that long-haired idiot you sent round here?" *(laughs)*. What I sensed in Mick was that he'd been rejected a lot. He'd been screwed over before, so he wanted to prove himself, he had a little bit of anger. But after a while we still weren't getting anywhere. We got Keith Levene in, who was interesting. Then we got hold of Joe, and I thought, "Yeah, finally we're going places…"

When Mick [Jones] wrote the songs, I had to get Joe to add in the street radical stuff. We'd always change the songs round a bit [thus Jones's I'm So Bored Of You became I'm So Bored With The USA]. Joe represented what I had to say, and that's where the politics came in. The Clash and the Sex Pistols were two different groups, really, running parallel: *Never Mind The Bollocks…* was about the bad behaviour, The Clash was more about getting a shitty job and not being able to do anything about it.

The two things that don't get picked up on enough was how punk liberated women. It got rid of men in tight satin trousers, groupies, all that Led Zeppelin shit; women could own their sexuality – though we seem to be going backwards on that now. The other thing is: why do you think I never let The Clash do Top Of The Pops? It was that whole Jimmy Savile thing. They hate me at the BBC. I knew about it, but I couldn't fucking say anything. There's a lot of censorship and it's even worse today. It's like North Korea.

The most upsetting thing about [the punk time] is that it's all being demolished. There is no Safe European Home any more, London isn't Calling, 'cos no one can afford to live there, let alone the youth. There isn't a Hammersmith Palais for blacks or whites to nick stuff in. It's gone. Punk took the power from the corporations and the reason today's music industry is shit is that musicians have allowed the corporations to take it back. I told [Def Jam label co-creator] Russell Simmons what he had to do [back in early '80s New York], and he took it on board. I was talking to that bloke [BBC political commentator] Andrew Marr, we used to meet in Richmond Park when I lived there, and I said, "Did Def Jam lead to Obama becoming president?" He seemed to think so. That's where all this stuff led.

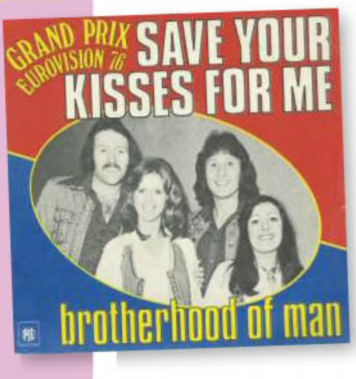
STATE OF THE ENEMY

Why punk *had* to happen: the 10 biggest-selling UK singles of 1976, re-endured by Danny Eccleston.

1. SAVE YOUR KISSES FOR ME

Brotherhood Of Man

Even pre the paedos-in-pop palaver, this was creepy. The gender-balanced Eurovision winners' ingratiating demeanour; that aggravating knee-hitch move in their 'dance'; the epitome of pop's reversion to family/light entertainment nostrum. "…Even though you're only threeee": yeuch.



2. DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART

Elton John & Kiki Dee

The Bitch is back, and comprehensively de-clawed in this definitive piece of mid-'70s chart-pop shimmer. The "Ooh-hoo, nobody knows it…" bit is good, though.

3. MISSISSIPPI

Pussycat

Dutch people make C&W for Irish pub jukeboxes. Horrible, empty, with perhaps a mitigating soupçon of the melancholy of Britain's tumbleweed mid '70s.

4. DANCING QUEEN

Abba

That's more like it. Faultless sophisto-disco from the Swedes' *Arrival* year, which also brought them the best-selling UK album in *Abba's Greatest Hits*.

5. A LITTLE BIT MORE

Dr Hook

The kings of hairy soft-porn country-pop outdo themselves: "When your body's had enough of me…" etc. Yeuch Pt 2.

6. IF YOU LEAVE ME NOW

Chicago

Again, not *evil* in and of itself, but as part of a prevailing miasma of gloopy MOR, indicative of the chart indigestion for which punk offered a timely emetic.

7. FERNANDO

Abba

The best song ever about Mexican-American hostilities in the mid-19th century (that isn't Santianna) racked up 10 million sales globally. Could Abba get bigger? Yes.

8. I LOVE TO LOVE (BUT MY BABY LOVES TO DANCE)

Tina Charles

Helium-voiced Londoner sums up the year's welter of cash-in sub-disco. It was no Young Hearts Run Free (Candi Staton's hit was the year's fifteenth-best seller).

9. THE ROUSSOS PHENOMENON EP

Demis Roussos

It was the loosely-attired big man's *annus giganticus*, with the operatic Forever And Ever the lead song on this 4-tracker. Sui generis.

10. DECEMBER, 1963 (OH, WHAT A NIGHT)

The 4 Seasons

Slick pop confection elevated by the skill of the execution, Frankie Valli's silken chorus and overall grasp on the levers of nostalgia. And yet, enough!

JULY

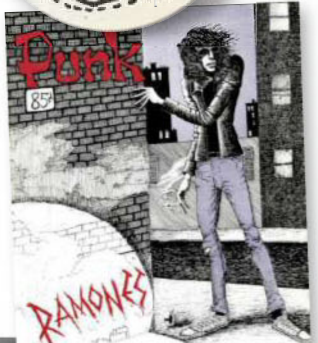
...BRITISH PUNK GETS ITS FIRST FANZINE

THE IDEAL COPY

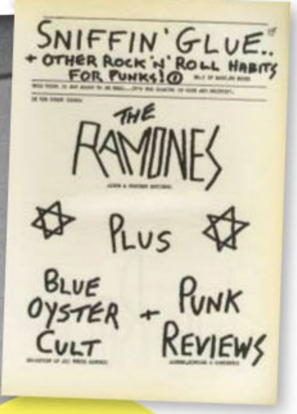
There was nowhere to read about punk. Until **MARK PERRY** stuck Sniffin' Glue together.

SNIFFIN'
GLUE.

THE FIRST PERSON I EVER MET from the punk scene was Shane MacGowan, at the bar in the Roundhouse when the Ramones played. I was working as a bank clerk at William & Glynn's at the time, but I remember telling him I was thinking of starting a magazine that covered the Ramones and Eddie & The Hot Rods, Blue Öyster Cult, those kinds of bands. In July 1976, I wouldn't have known who the Sex Pistols were, as I wasn't a part of that Malcolm McLaren fashion crowd. I was from a different part of town – Deptford, in those days pretty much the worst area of London. Then the next night when the Ramones played at Dingwalls I got talking to this guy Brian James, who told me he was in a group called The Damned. I'd never heard of them either, but I mentioned the magazine to him too.



Around the same time, I went to the Rock On stall in Newport Court in Soho, where I'd buy stuff like Iggy Pop, Blue Öyster Cult, The Flamin' Groovies. They sold John Holmstrom's American fanzine Punk, so I asked if there were any British magazines about that kind of music. They said, "No, why don't you do one yourself?" They were half-joking, but I said, "OK, I will." I typed out the first issue at home, with the Ramones and Blue Öyster Cult, and got my girlfriend Louise to photocopy it at her work. The title came from the Ramones song, of course. The Rock On stall bought the first batch of 20 copies, and gave me money to get some more done. Bizarre in Praed Street in Paddington, who distributed the Sky Dog label and sold imports, took some, so did Virgin in Oxford Street. We sold around 200 in the end.



SNIFFIN' GLUE..
+ OTHER ROCK 'N' ROLL HABITS FOR PUNKS! ①

THE RAMONES

✡ PLUS ✡

BLUE OYSTER CULT + PUNK REVIEWS

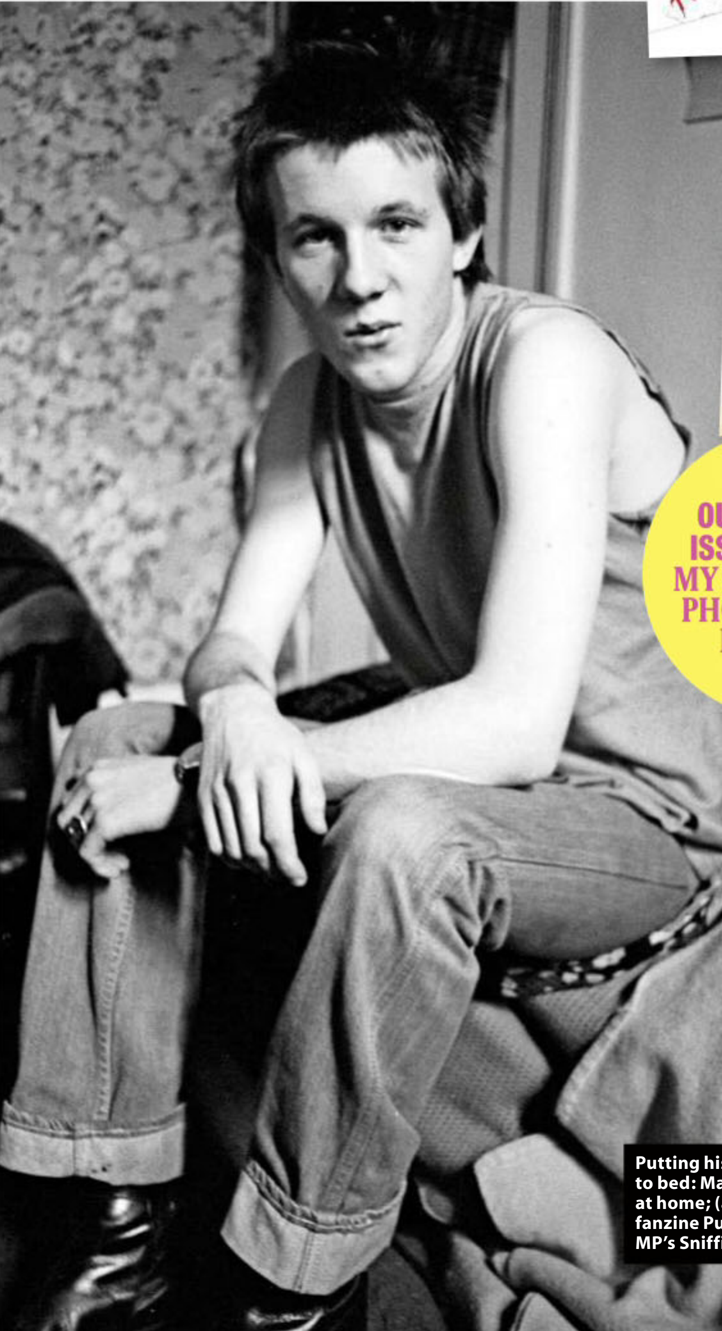
I was still a hippy kid in a brown satin jacket, but I cut my hair after I saw the Pistols at the 100 Club [on August 11] with Caroline Coon, who I met in a van going to review Eddie & The Hot Rods in Hastings for issue two. We started covering punk, and that's when I noticed the impact the magazine was having. Jonh Ingham wrote a spread in Sounds, citing all the key punk bands, and I was in there too – "Mark P, editor of Sniffin' Glue". I thought, Bloody hell, I'm in the music papers! The local paper phoned me up for an interview.

> **"I TYPED OUT THE FIRST ISSUE AT HOME. MY GIRLFRIEND PHOTOCOPIED IT AT HER WORK."**

Very quickly after that, I began to get that thing, "Oh, be careful what you say in front of him, he's a journalist…" The Clash were really quite offish, and the Pistols were these fashionistas who saw us as these Johnny Come Latelys. I was like, For fuck's sake, I'm on your side! I'm championing this stuff. One joke was that you hadn't earned your punk credentials until you'd been threatened by Jean-Jacques Burnel. That happened quite early on, in September 1976, when I went into The Stranglers' dressing room at the Nashville wearing a [Hammersmith] Gorillas badge. He threw me out. Later, Mick Jones threatened to drown me in the Thames!

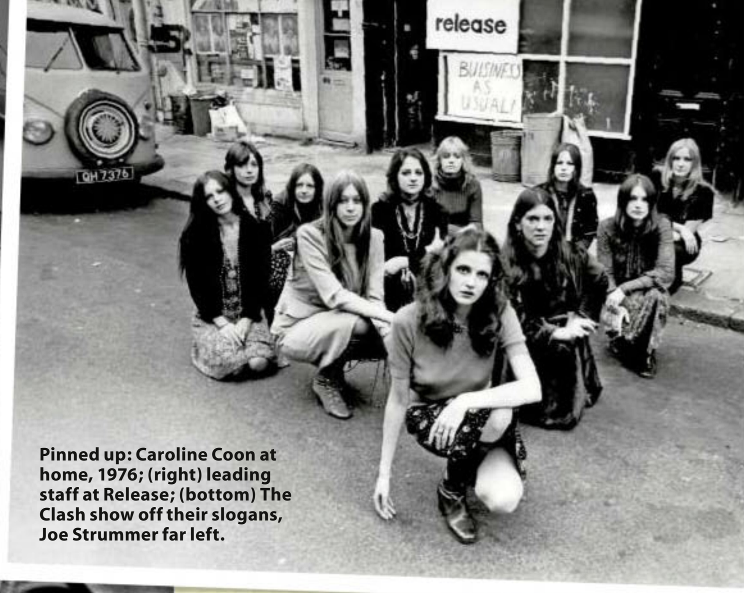
For all its DIY approach, Sniffin' Glue's strength was it stuck quite closely to the rules. It had headlines, a clear layout, it was entertaining and opinionated, it wasn't like Shane MacGowan's Bondage fanzine, scrawled all over the place and looking shit. [Co-editor and future broadcaster] Danny Baker said, "Sniffin' Glue should have been guitar-shaped", because it was really all about the music. I mean, we took the piss out of The Jam for tuning up onstage and wearing suits, but we loved them really.

I think if there's one person that sums up the effect punk had, it's me. In one year I went from being a bank clerk to creating the best music publication in the world, working as an A&R for Step Forward records and recording demos with my band Alternative TV in EMI's studios. That was what punk could do.



Putting his magazine to bed: Mark Perry at home; (above) US fanzine Punk and MP's Sniffin' Glue.

Getty Images, Mirrorpix, Camera Press, Rex Features



Pinned up: Caroline Coon at home, 1976; (right) leading staff at Release; (bottom) The Clash show off their slogans, Joe Strummer far left.

...AND HITS THE ROCK PRESS

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

CAROLINE COON fought off the fogeys to put punk in print. "There was safety in numbers," she tells MOJO.

IN 1974, AFTER SOME YEARS ON THE POLITICAL front line, I was feeling rather tired and angry and disillusioned. In 1967, I'd used my art school grant to start Release, an organisation that provided legal advice and help for young people being arrested for possession of drugs, which was the method the Establishment was using at the time to try to crush the hippy movement. Because of our expertise, when Mick Jagger, George Harrison and John Lennon were busted they were told, "Go to Caroline." It was Release that tipped off Eric Clapton he was about to be busted at the Pheasantry in Chelsea.

By the mid '70s, things had changed politically and socially. Some of the '60s rebels had gotten very rich, but instead of paying tax or giving back to the community they had pissed off abroad or lodged themselves in country mansions. And organisations like Release needed money to operate; political change needs philanthropy. At the same time, all the peacock fun of the '60s had gone and been replaced by a greyness. Unemployment was peaking and there was a grinding recession. So I wondered, What now? What would the next generation of white teenagers do? How would they express the direness of their situation?

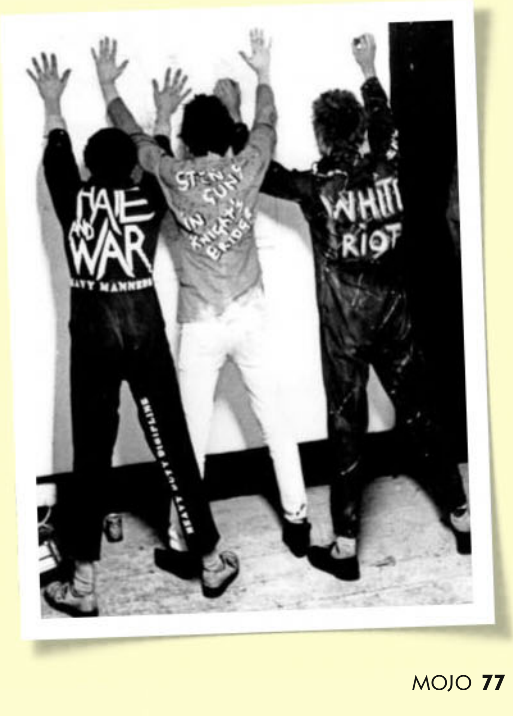
I was looking out for their reaction when I was told that Malcolm McLaren – I knew him because I bought a few things from SEX – was forming a band called the Sex Pistols. Just the name, the antithesis to the hippy idea of peace and love, made me sit up and take note. By then, I'd been headhunted to write about music and youth issues for Melody Maker. A friend of mine who worked with Vivienne, Alan Jones, took me along to the Pistols' first gig, at St Martin's School Of Art. And there it was – there he was – Johnny Rotten, the revengeful spirit of the age, jeering, angry, and having fun as he yelled, "You boring old farts!"

I thought, "This is fantastic!" But I wasn't allowed to write about it in the paper. You'd go into editorial meetings and say it was the next thing, and you'd be laughed at. I think journalists and editors were horrified that the next generation was coming along and they would become redundant. And they certainly didn't want to be told this by "a girl"! There was an awful lot of misogyny around. Some of the quotes at the time – that punk was fad, that it's musical garbage – showed how scared they were.

"SOME OF THE QUOTES – THAT PUNK WAS GARBAGE – SHOWED HOW SCARED THEY WERE."

By the summer of 1976, the MM couldn't ignore it any longer. So when I wrote the article that gave it the name 'punk rock' – the term had been used to describe the American rock bands of the '60s and was more glamorous than 'rebel'; I joined together the new groups on the British scene into a critical mass. I knew from the hippy era that there would be more security for youth if they belonged to a movement. It was the idea of safety in numbers, and also about creating an identity.

At that first Pistols gig, Bernie Rhodes had seen me talking to Malcolm and ran up saying, "I've got a band too!", which of course became The Clash. When I went to their Camden HQ to interview them, there was Joe Strummer with "Hate And War" stencilled on the back of his boiler suit. That was it: the idea of talking about Love And Peace was over. Punk was clearly going to be the voice of the next generation.



JULY

...RAMONES BOMBARD LONDON'S ROUNDHOUSE

EXPORT STRENGTH!

Da Brudders' British Invasion kicked homegrown punk to the next level. **PAT GILBERT** rounds up the witnesses..

ON SUNDAY JULY 4, 1976, WHILE MICKEY Mouse, dressed as Uncle Sam, led a ticker-tape parade up Fifth Avenue to celebrate 200 years of American independence, an unexpected but seismic Anglo-US exchange was taking place 3,000 miles away in a grubby ex-railway yard in London's Camden Town. On the face of it, the special bicentennial bash at the Roundhouse didn't look at all extraordinary: The Flamin' Groovies and the Ramones – two American tough-luck stories signed to hip Warner Bros subsidiary Sire – were scheduled to perform with Surrey pub-rockers The Stranglers as support. But the events of that evening and the next would influence the future course of music forever.

Though The Flamin' Groovies – then going through an ill-timed Beatles phase – had a cult following, it was the Ramones that many in the crowd were curious to see. Unbeknownst to the New York four-piece, their self-titled, February '76 debut album had become a touchstone for scores of music fans, lured by its Fauvist garage-punk songs about Nazis, Vietnam, the CIA and sniffing glue. So primitive as to appear almost avant-garde, its perverted bubblegum thud exerted a powerful sway on the inexpert musicians feeling their way around the protean UK punk scene.

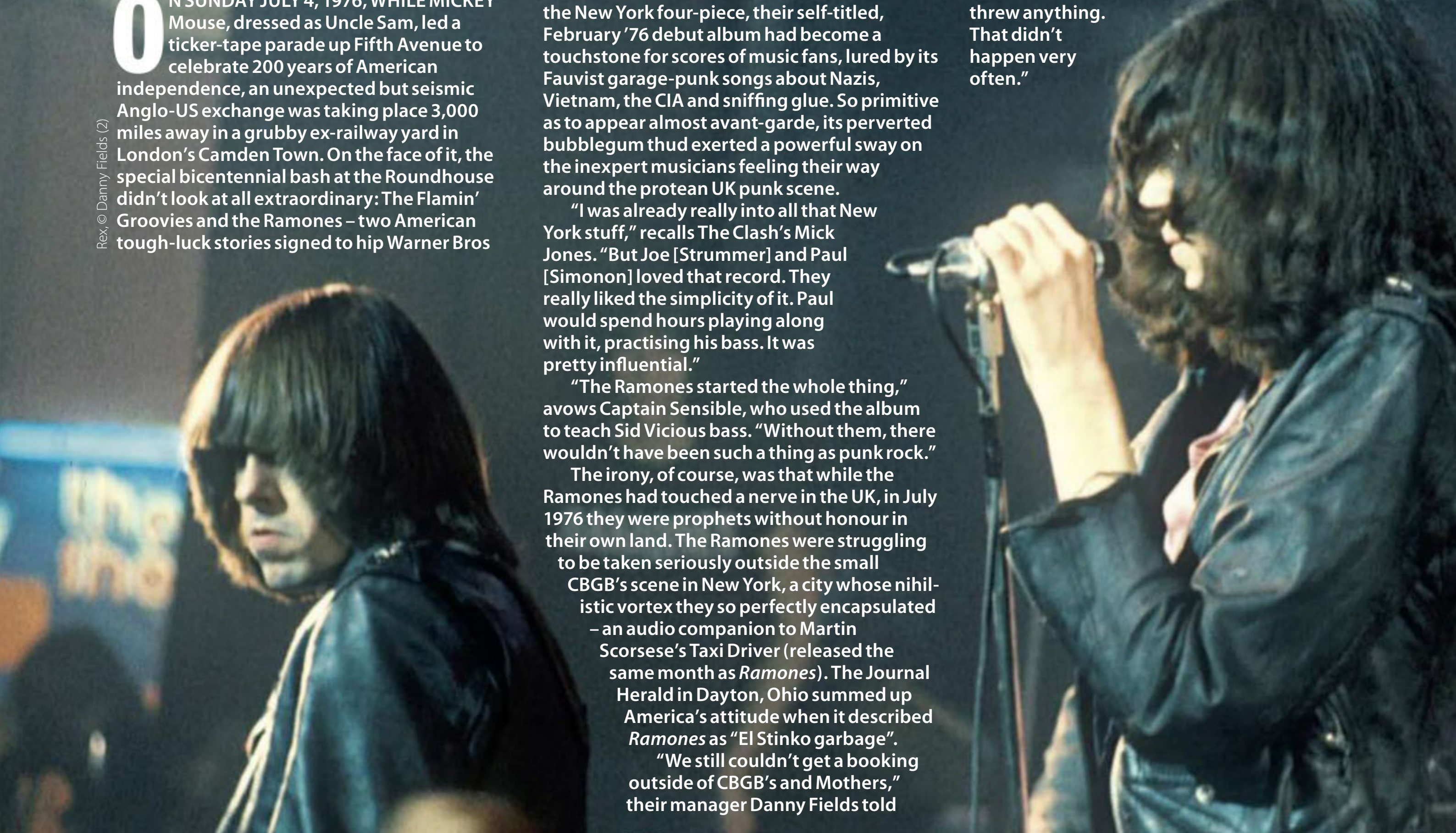
"I was already really into all that New York stuff," recalls The Clash's Mick Jones. "But Joe [Strummer] and Paul [Simonon] loved that record. They really liked the simplicity of it. Paul would spend hours playing along with it, practising his bass. It was pretty influential."

"The Ramones started the whole thing," avows Captain Sensible, who used the album to teach Sid Vicious bass. "Without them, there wouldn't have been such a thing as punk rock."

The irony, of course, was that while the Ramones had touched a nerve in the UK, in July 1976 they were prophets without honour in their own land. The Ramones were struggling to be taken seriously outside the small CBGB's scene in New York, a city whose nihilistic vortex they so perfectly encapsulated – an audio companion to Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver (released the same month as *Ramones*). The Journal Herald in Dayton, Ohio summed up America's attitude when it described *Ramones* as "El Stinko garbage".

"We still couldn't get a booking outside of CBGB's and Mothers," their manager Danny Fields told MOJO. "They wouldn't even have us in New Jersey or Connecticut! It was frustrating." At one show, even David Johansen of The New York Dolls – themselves hardly the height of musical endowment – was moved to bellow, "Give it up!"

"A good show for us," explained drummer/mentor Tommy Ramone, "was when no one threw anything. That didn't happen very often."



Rex, © Danny Fields (2)

THE ROUND HOUSE
MAIN THEATRE ENTRANCE HERE
DOWNSTAIRS
100 YDS DOWN THE ROAD (BY THE TELEPHONE BOX) OR THROUGH THE MAIN RESTAURANT AND WINE BAR (NOT SUNDAYS)
RAZOR BACKS
ant

WHEN THE RAMONES TOUCHED DOWN AT Heathrow, London was in the midst of a punishing heatwave. July 4 would go on record as the warmest day of what would prove the hottest summer in decades. But this only added to the holiday mood. To the group's surprise, their co-headlining show, with tickets selling for £1.50, was a sell-out.

The Stranglers kicked things off with a tetchy performance, with Jean-Jacques Burnel and Hugh Cornwell attempting to goad audience members into a fight; the Ramones then took the stage to by far the biggest crowd they'd ever confronted. Dee Dee, wearing a Prince Charles T-shirt, unleashed his customary "1-2-3-4!" war cry… and nothing happened. The PA had blown. The bassist ranted, "Dese things shoulda been checked before we came on!", to which a wit in the crowd shouted, "Fuck off, you Nazi bastards!" The group did just that while the problem was rectified, then returned for a 45-minute set comprising every song on the first album – Beat On The Brat, Blitzkrieg Bop, 53rd & 3rd, Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue, Let's Dance, Havana Affair, et al, plus a new one called Gimme Gimme Shock Treatment.

"A couple of people down the front were shouting, 'Hey-ho, let's go!'" remembers Neil Hay, who would later form cult Mod band Billy Karloff & The Extremes. "So a few people obviously knew the tracks. But the rest of us were thinking, Hmm, they can't play very well. We were all into '70s guitar groups. Johnny had that weird [Mosrite] guitar and pudding-basin haircut. Later I really liked them, but at the time we thought they were terrible."

Mark Perry demurs: "It was brilliant. I thought they were the future of music."

The performance was deemed such a success that another show was quickly arranged for the following night at Dingwalls, the tiny club just a few minutes' walk from the Roundhouse. It was on that Monday afternoon that The Clash – whose HQ was nearby, but who had been making their live debut in Sheffield the previous night – met their heroes in the alley behind the venue.

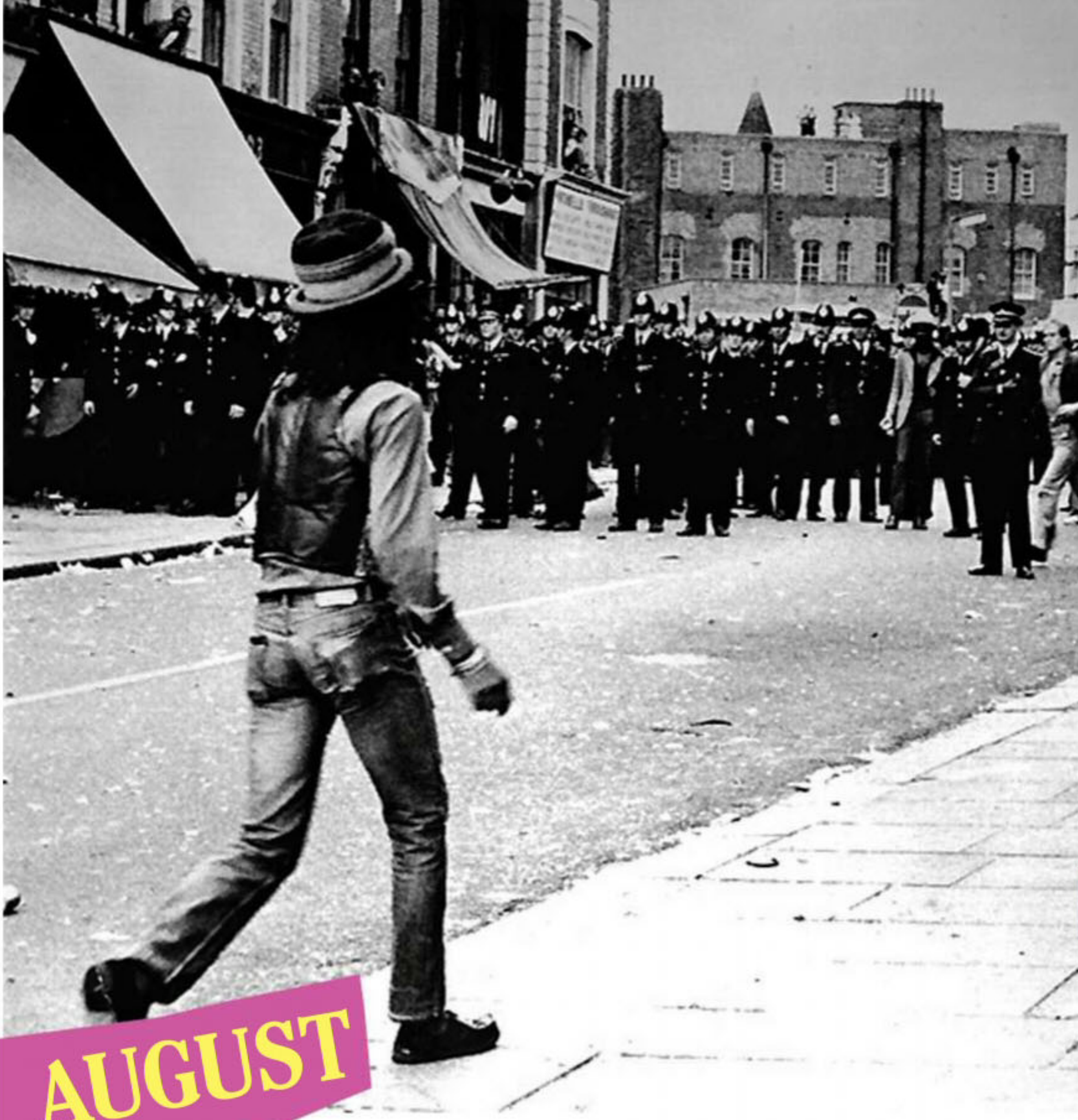
"There were these cute guys, they were very stylish," recalls Danny Fields. "They were highly knowledgeable about what was going on in New York, and they flattered the Ramones. Paul Simonon was saying, 'Hey, you're great, you're playing to 2,000 people.' Johnny said, 'No, we really stink. If you wait 'til you're really good musicians you'll be too old to play. Come and see us tonight.' I think after that The Clash weren't ashamed to get out there and do their version of what we were doing."

The Dingwalls gig was incendiary (Joe Strummer described it as being like "white heat"), but it would also highlight the first public fissure in the punk scene between the sharp, style-conscious Clash/Pistols elite and the older pub rock crowd. Before the show, Simonon and Jean-Jacques Burnel squared up to each other to fight in Dingwalls' courtyard. "Me, the Pistols and Chrissie Hynde were standing behind Paul, and they were backed up by their crew, The Finchley Boys," recalls Mick Jones. The older, wiser Hugh Cornwell informed his friend Joe Strummer, "It looks like your bass-player's having a punch-up with my bass-player."

Whatever the intra-UK punk nuances, the Ramones' visit had impressed their hegemony over the genre on both sides of the Atlantic. "I think those gigs were historically important," said Tommy. "It was like a Bicentennial irony – we came over and it was the start of something for those guys, and a pretty good experience for the Ramones, too. We went home on a real high. The only thing was that back home people still didn't like us."

"JOHNNY SAID, 'IF YOU WAIT 'TIL YOU'RE GOOD MUSICIANS YOU'LL BE TOO OLD TO PLAY.'"

Gimme gimme: (main, from left) Johnny, Joey and Dee Dee Ramone show how it's done; (bottom, from left) Joey, outside the gig; the epochal debut album; The Clash's Paul Simonon with Keith Levene Chimes (second and third right) and Levene's pal Stuart Keen (far left) meet Da Brudders at Dingwalls.



Don Letts, "getting out of the fucking way" as Notting Hill warms up, 1976; (above) at Acme Attractions, King's Road, with soundtrack albums.

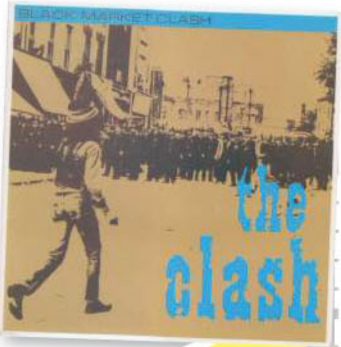
1977
WHITE RIOT
the CLASH

AUGUST

...RIOTS KICK OFF IN NOTTING HILL

BABYLON'S BURNING

Punk and reggae become blood brothers under the Westway. By **DON LETTS**.



I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE famous picture of me at the Notting Hill riots was being taken. In fact, I didn't even see it until four years later, in 1980, when Paul Simonon asked me if The Clash could use it for the cover of their *Black Market Clash* album. It was taken on Portobello Road, near the junctions with Oxford Gardens and Cambridge Gardens, and came from the same roll of film, shot by this guy called Rocco Macauley, used on the back of The Clash's first album.

I didn't go to the Carnival [in August 1976] with the group, as many people assume, because I didn't really know them at the time. I'd seen them drinking at a basement shebeen in Ladbroke Grove, and I knew they were a unit because of the way they looked. But I didn't know they were Bernie's rival group to Malcolm's. On the day of the riot, they got seriously involved, which was the inspiration for Joe and Mick to write White Riot, but I was hanging out that afternoon with my Rasta brethren – I'm a lover not a fighter. This shot looks like I'm confronting the cops, but I'm actually getting out the fucking way, as there were hundreds of brothers behind me just about to start throwing bricks at the line of police.

What the picture perfectly sums up – even though I'm getting the hell out of there – is the culture clash and militant dimension that punk would come to stand for. Punks like John Lydon, The Clash and The Slits were already heavily into reggae, which around that time was getting more pro-black and nationalistic. That's why the skinheads stopped liking it. When you think about it, the lyrics to Bob Marley's Chant Down Babylon and Anarchy In The UK were saying the same thing. The riot happened because black people, including yours truly, were fed up of being arrested under the SUS laws; but white kids were getting pissed off too. They were rough times.

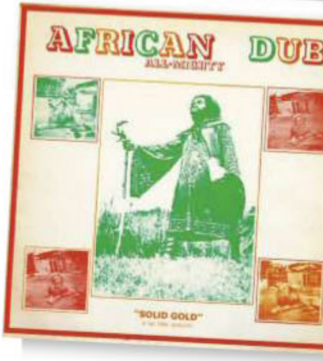
"IN 1976, ACME ON A SATURDAY WAS JUMPING. I SOLD WEED TO PETER O'TOOLE ONCE."

I'd seen punk develop because I worked at Acme Attractions on the King's Road, started by John Krivine, which became a rival to Malcolm and Vivienne's shop. It was in Antiquarius, this place with old-fogey stalls a bit like the Antiques Roadshow. Acme moved to the basement and was set up to look like my front room with a sofa, TV, a scooter to sit on and a record player that would pump out reggae at maximum volume, which pissed off the other people in the building.

I'd been working in the King's Road since 1973 – it wasn't like

Rocco Redondo (courtesy Don Letts, Sheila Rock, Marc Zermati/Skydog Records (2)

KING TUBBYS
meets rockers uptown
AGUSTUS PABLO



anywhere else on the planet, let alone the rest of London. There were people around like Andrew Logan, Duggie Fields, the cast of The Rocky Horror Show. It was a hedonistic, gay, post-glam rock scene. We'd go clubbing at the Sombrero club in High Street Kensington, where Bowie would go with his tailor Freddie Burretti. For a young black guy from Brixton it was a total fucking trip! I used to drink in the Roebuck pub with people like [gangster and Princess Margaret's alleged lover] John Bindon. He was an out-and-out racist, but he used to like me because I was cheeky and gave him loads of shit back.

In 1976, Acme on a Saturday was jumping. You could either hang out at Malcolm's shop where the trousers were £60 and the staff would try to intimidate you, or come to Don Letts' shop where trousers were 20 quid, Rasta, and you could buy weed under the counter. In fact, I sold weed to Peter O'Toole once. People came there from all over the country, and there were the Americans like Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde, Debbie Harry. Malcolm's shop was Eurocentric, rooted in the Situationists and politics; mine was a culture clash. It became a magnet for people looking for something different to the mainstream.

Jeanette Lee, who worked with me, also attracted people. I was going out with her at the time, and she was very easy on the eye. John [Lydon] would come in, but not so much Steve and Paul. They preferred Malcolm's place, which I wasn't welcome in. Vivienne demanded complete loyalty and saw me working at Acme as a betrayal. Sid would come in, too, or John Beverley as he was then. He was quite taken with Jeanette, who'd give him the time of day, while I wouldn't. He was a bit gormless, a loveable oaf: "I keep going down [gay club and future Roxy club venue] Chaguaramas, but they keep beating me up, hur hur."

Acme was signposting the multi-cultural way that London was going. It's like the photo of me at the riot, it represented the changing face of the city in the 1970s. In the shop I was playing stuff like *King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown* and the *African Dub* albums, but when punk came along the two cultures collided. Punk was exciting, the music was stripped-down and raw; but it also became a complete subculture, with politics, fashion, fanzines, that's what gave it such strength.

When I saw The Clash play I knew I wanted to be involved. They were incorporating reggae, talking about the issues on the streets. Being just a fan wasn't an option, I wanted to be part of it, and going on to become the guy who made their videos was central to that. I had to think about being on the cover of their album cover for – what? – about one millisecond.

...PUNK GOES TO FRANCE

BRUISE CRUISE

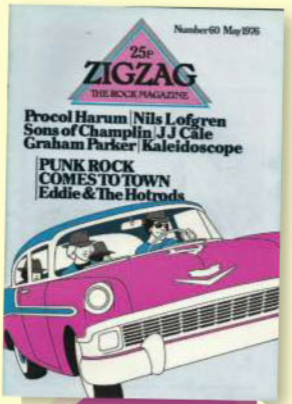
Eddie & The Hot Rods' **BARRIE MASTERS** remembers Mont De Marsan, punk rock's first festival.

WE STARTED A BAND BECAUSE there was nothing to do in Canvey Island and we were all into our music. I first saw Dr. Feelgood when we were starting out and thought, "Where did this come from?" The Rods was basically four kids going mad and having fun. Half our set was covers, like Gloria and Get Out Of Denver; out of respect, not because we didn't have our own songs. Ours was from the heart not the head. We did what we loved and, luckily for us, a few people saw it the way we did. When we were first labelled as 'punk' [a 1976 ZigZag cover announced: 'Eddie And The Hot Rods: Punk Rock Comes To Town'] I hated it. The American and English views of 'punk' were totally different. We never tried to be fast or outrageous; it was just the way we were and happened naturally. We shared bills with The 101'ers, who were very similar to us: naive. And the Pistols supported us at the Marquee.

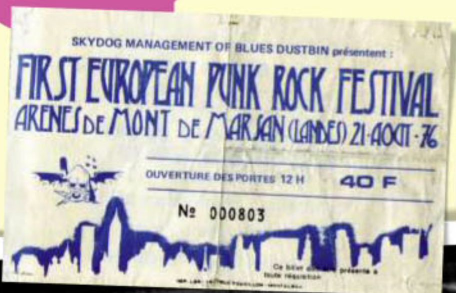
Headlining at the Mont de Marsan festival was a major thing at my age; I was 19 and sharing a bill with The Damned, Nick Lowe, Pink Fairies, Roogalator, Hammersmith Gorillas and a couple of French bands – Shakin' Street and Bijou. The festival was madness. It was done on a few phone calls. Marc Zermati was the organiser, with help from Larry Debay [owner of early London punk epicentre Bizarre Records on Praed Street]. I was in awe of all these great bands coming together in this bull ring in the south of France. We got there early and made a week of it. It was one of those hectic, chaotic things where whatever could go on did go on.

The festival was running half-a-day behind. Marc's a lovely fellow but was a bit of a mess in those days, which might have been chemical abuse. He just didn't know what day it was. [Stiff Records'] Jake Riviera took over. He was a very clever man, with a charisma about him – I was very impressed that he could speak French! Our tour manager fell over and broke his arm, his elbow was poking through his sleeve. I was too young to be a hippy but, even though this hectic, manic thing was going on, the festival had this magical vibe. The whole town was really friendly, the local record store, all the bars, everyone. The one the following year was different; a few nasty things happened then. That was where they had all the bands and bit off more than they could chew.

As told to Kris Needs



"OUR TOUR MANAGER BROKE HIS ARM. HIS ELBOW WAS POKING THROUGH HIS SLEEVE."



SKYDOG MANAGEMENT OF BLUES DUSTBIN présentent :

FIRST EUROPEAN PUNK ROCK FESTIVAL

ARENES DE MONT DE MARSAN (LANDES) 21-AOUT-76

OUVERTURE DES PORTES 12 H 40 F

Nº 000803

Barrie Masters does anything he wants to do with Eddie & The Hot Rods at Mont de Marsan, August 21, 1976.

SEPTEMBER

...SID AND VIV STEP FORWARD

BRITAIN IN BLOOM

The Flowers Of Romance wilted after Sid Vicious's coup at the 100 Club Punk Festival. But it spurred **VIV ALBERTINE** on to greater things.

I WAS WALKING ALONG PORTObello with Mick Jones one day and we bumped into Sid and John [Lydon]. I didn't know Sid at that time. I mentioned that my Swiss grandmother Freda had died and left me 200 quid and I was going to buy a guitar and start a band. And Sid said, "Oh I'll be in a band with you, Viv."

John named us, and I thought it was the best name ever. All the other names were like The Lurkers, Spitballs, Bollocks, snot things, horrible stuff and John came through with this really elegant phrase. To me, we were the flowers of a romantic era – the aspirational post-war period – but look how we turned out: these crumpled, twisted weeds.

We'd rehearse in the basement of Joe Strummer's squat in Orsett Terrace: me, Sid, Palmolive on drums and Sarah Hall on bass. None of us could play. We'd try to do Ramones songs but couldn't get through one. Every day through summer 1976 – it was excruciating!

Sid would have scraps of lyrics like Belsen Is A Gas. I didn't want to write stuff like that but I hadn't found my voice as a writer. And I suspected the things I would want to write wouldn't sit well with Sid. We were council flat kids, but in other ways very different. Sid was macho in his own way, very unsentimental. Not very verbal. But underneath it he had the potential to be quite smart. And I never heard him be sexist towards a woman.

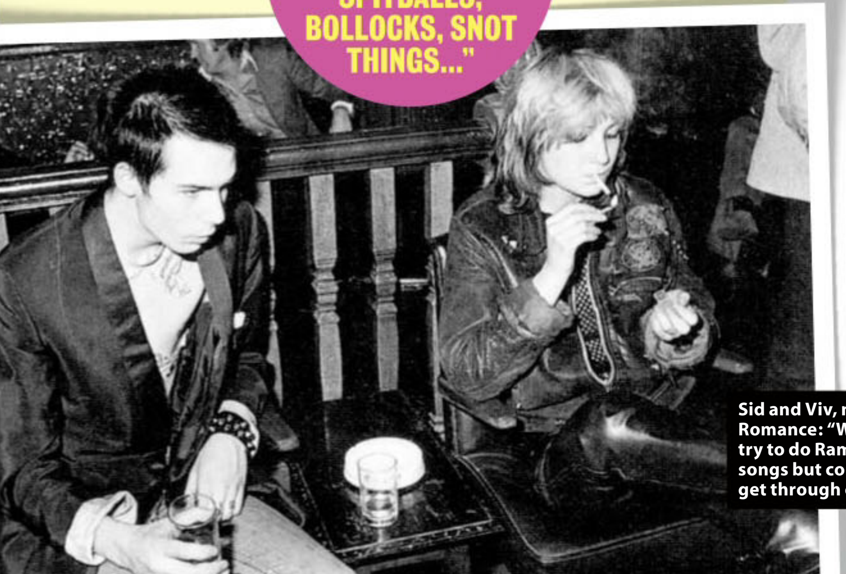
When he played drums with Siouxsie & The Banshees at the 100 Club Punk Festival [September 20] I was worried I'd lost him. I mean, they'd got through a whole song! That steady, thundering beat, all toms – I had no idea he could do that. And Siouxsie seemed so confident, intoning over the top. But straight after Sid told me he didn't want to be a drummer, so that was a relief.

In the end Sid decided he wanted a proper rock'n'roll band and it wasn't long before he joined the Pistols. When he chucked me out, I couldn't imagine anything better than The Flowers Of Romance. But the minute I got together with The Slits, me and Ari [Up, singer] sparked and I wrote a song straight away. If it hadn't been for my experience with Sid I wouldn't have known how important it was to hang on to Ari, as difficult as she was.

None of The Slits had a father and I'm not sure if any of us could have been in The Slits if we'd had a father we'd loved or were scared of. Ari, Tessa [Pollitt, bass] and Palmolive were all very iconoclastic in their own ways. I'd found my rightful home and so had Sid.

As told to Danny Eccleston

"ALL THE OTHER NAMES WERE LIKE THE LURKERS, SPITBALLS, BOLLOCKS, SNOT THINGS..."



Sid and Viv, no Romance: "We'd try to do Ramones songs but couldn't get through one."

OCTOBER

...THE DAMNED RELEASE THE UK'S FIRST PUNK SINGLE

FLOWERED UP

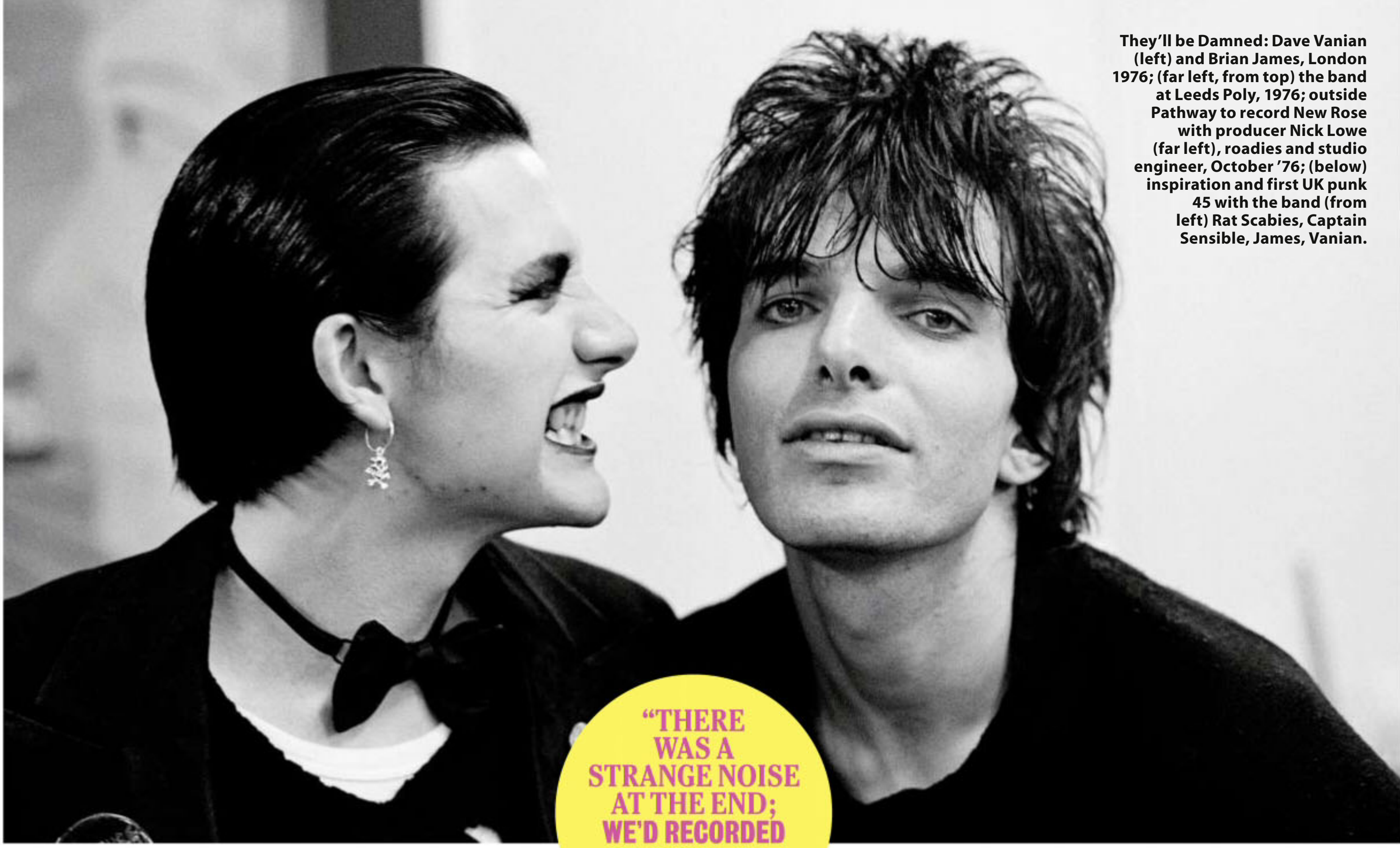
How New Rose stole a march on the scene's chin-strokers. "What we did was by its very nature political," says singer **DAVE VANIAN**.

I HAD NO INTENTION OF BEING A SINGER IN A rock'n'roll band. I actually wanted to be a commercial illustrator, but I found it was a sealed shop. I was at a loose end, 19, and working as a grave digger in this beautiful, peaceful old cemetery. I would tend the plants – I'm a gardener, so it was great – but at weekends I would go into London [from Hemel Hempstead], looking for something. If you had a certain image, which I did, you had to be careful where you went, which clubs, or you'd get the crap kicked out of you. But London was awash with young people wanting to do something creative. You could feel a real buzz.

I'd been to Malcolm's shop and knew [SEX employee] Jordan. So when Malcolm put [pre-Damned band] Masters Of The Backside together [in April 1976], I was brought in because of the way I looked. Rat Scabies came in on drums, and he introduced me to this guitarist called Brian James. We liked the same music – the New York Dolls, the MC5, The Stooges, The Shangri-Las. They made me audition for a new band they had at a church hall in Notting Hill; I turned up half an hour early to check out the opposition, but the guy before me didn't show. That was Sid Vicious (*laughs*). The Damned could have been a very different story.

It was all extremely frenetic from then on. Brian was loud, but he had a sound of his own, and played with such incredible passion. It was inspiring. He wore a red waistcoat with skulls on the back that he'd got from

Getty Images (2), Camera Press



They'll be Damned: Dave Vanian (left) and Brian James, London 1976; (far left, from top) the band at Leeds Poly, 1976; outside Pathway to record New Rose with producer Nick Lowe (far left), roadies and studio engineer, October '76; (below) inspiration and first UK punk 45 with the band (from left) Rat Scabies, Captain Sensible, James, Vanian.

> "THERE WAS A STRANGE NOISE AT THE END; WE'D RECORDED OVER SOMEONE ELSE'S DEMO."

James Williamson of The Stooges. Rat was this crazy character, and Captain Sensible… well, he was just Ray then, or 'Eats', because he could never do anything until he'd had something to eat. He used to have long Marc Bolan corkscrew hair and was initially very quiet, sussing us all out. Then for The Damned's second gig, he shaved off all his hair, poured a can of beer over his head and Captain Sensible was born.

We went straight out on the road, in a van with a mattress in the back. At Mont De Marsan, Rat had to borrow a drum kit from the local support band, who begged him to treat it carefully. Instead, he set it on fire and kicked it across the stage. The French audience loved us: rock'n'roll was still popular there, and they were big on the MC5 and Stooges. It was on the coach down to the bottom of France that Ray got his name: he was walking up and down the aisle, pretending to be an airline pilot, saying, "This is your captain speaking," when someone said, "Yeah, you are a captain, a right Captain Sensible." Sean Tyla from the Tyla Gang hated us; he threatened to flush the Captain's head down the toilet, as someone had cracked an egg in Cap's hair and it was still there two days later.

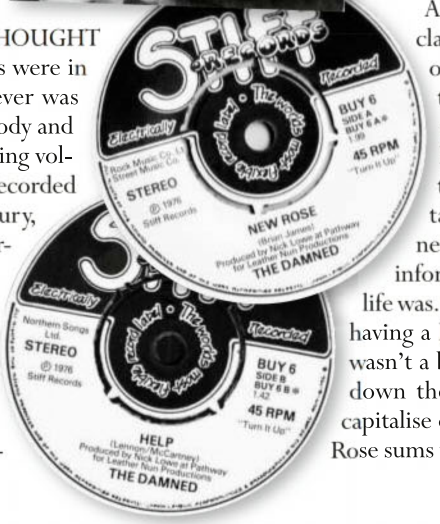
Red Bird
Tender Tunes Music, Inc. Trio Music Co., Inc. BMI
RB 10-014
L/S 1040
2:48
Kama Sutra Production
Prod. by: Shadow Morton & Jeff Barry
LEADER OF THE PACK
(J. Barry, E. Greenwich, G. Morton)
THE SHANGRI-LAS
STUYVESANT PRODUCTIONS, INC.

THEN WE WENT INTO THE STUDIO. I THOUGHT I could sing a bit, but some of Brian's songs were in the wrong key for me, so I just did whatever was needed. He'd stand in rehearsal and sing the melody and words into my ear, while playing guitar at deafening volume, and I'd interpret that as best I could. We recorded New Rose for Stiff at Pathway studios in Highbury, which was in an old house with a rickety spiral staircase. It was the smallest studio you've ever seen. The drums were placed where they were because, in that part of the room, you couldn't stand up. I ended up doing vocals in the corridor with the door shut, it was so loud.

[Producer] Nick Lowe wanted to capture what we sounded like live, which is why that record has so much energy. It has a great sound. I added the "Is she really going out with him?" intro as a nod to The Shangri-Las' Leader Of The Pack. I'd just said it one day, on the spot, and it stayed. When we played back the song there was a strange noise at the end; it turned out that Stiff had no money for fresh tape, and we'd been recording over someone else's demo. It was all done on a tight budget, but was great fun to do. Help, the B-side, was one of the early covers we used to play; another was Circles by The Who.

The fact we came out with the first 'punk' single seemed irrelevant to us. We just thought we'd created this amazing record. At the start all the [punk] bands got on, and we all felt as people we were going somewhere. People were always so passionate, and I loved the fact all the groups were different; being creative and unique was the point. Then when it broke, and everyone began getting press, there were suddenly all these rivalries. A lot of it came from the managers. Bernie [Rhodes] was over-politicised and pushed The Clash in a particular way. We got accused of being a 'fun' band, but we didn't want to talk about politics; we thought doing what we did was by its very nature political.

Also, looking back, I think the more working-class bands, like us, who didn't go to art school, or have the benefit of a wider view of things, tended to make the sort of records you could stick on and enjoy after doing the dull job you had to earn money; you could have a good time and forget about work. We were entertaining and provocative, but didn't feel the need to talk about things we weren't necessarily informed about, or drone on about how bad your life was. And because we dressed differently, and liked having a laugh, we quickly became outsiders. Which wasn't a bad thing to be; what is a pity is that further down the line we missed lots of opportunities to capitalise on what we did in those early days. But New Rose sums up how exciting they were.


STIFF RECORDS
Electrically Recorded
BUY 6
SIDE A
45 RPM
"Turn It Up"
STEREO
℗ 1976 Stiff Records
NEW ROSE
(Brian James)
Produced by Nick Lowe at Pathway for Leather Nun Productions
THE DAMNED
Northern Songs Ltd.
STEREO
℗ 1976 Stiff Records
BUY 6
SIDE B
45 RPM
"Turn It Up"
HELP
(Lennon/McCartney)
Produced by Nick Lowe at Pathway for Leather Nun Productions
THE DAMNED

THE SCREAM

EMI
Anarchy In The U.K.
(Rotten - Jones - Matlock - Cook)
EMI Music Publishing Ltd
Sex Pistols
Produced by Chris Thomas
℗1976 EMI Records Ltd.
EMI 2566

How the Pistols' extraordinary debut single came to be. By producer **CHRIS THOMAS**.

THERE WAS A CONFLUENCE OF THINGS THAT LED me to the Pistols. Chris Spedding had taken me to their Screen On The Green gig [on August 29] and I had already met Malcolm McLaren back in 1975, because he'd wanted me to produce the New York Dolls, although that didn't happen. The official approach actually came from their A&R man, Mike Thorne at EMI, because the sessions at Wessex with Dave Goodman hadn't worked out. It hadn't been decided then that Anarchy would be the first single, so to show me what they had, Malcolm came round to my house in Ealing with Glen, Steve and Paul, but not John – that was my first experience of Malcolm messing with him!

They played me a demo; Pretty Vacant had a great riff, and I thought they really had something I could work with. As a group they reminded me of The Who – that three-piece rock band plus singer, there was something very English about it. The next thing was, we went into Wessex and John wasn't there because he hadn't been told about it! That made it very difficult when he did turn up, because he immediately saw me as the enemy.

I've read Glen saying Anarchy was done quite quickly, but I don't remember it being like that at all. I think it was pretty hard, and that we had to do multi-edits between takes to get the backing track. Then John turned up to record the vocal, and I couldn't understand what he was doing. He was sort of… screaming. So I went out on the [studio floor] and asked what was going on and he said, "You're the one with the track record, you sort it out." I thought, Oh shit; he was obviously really suspicious of everything. So I said, Right, let's go to the pub. That loosened things up, and then we went back and worked on it.

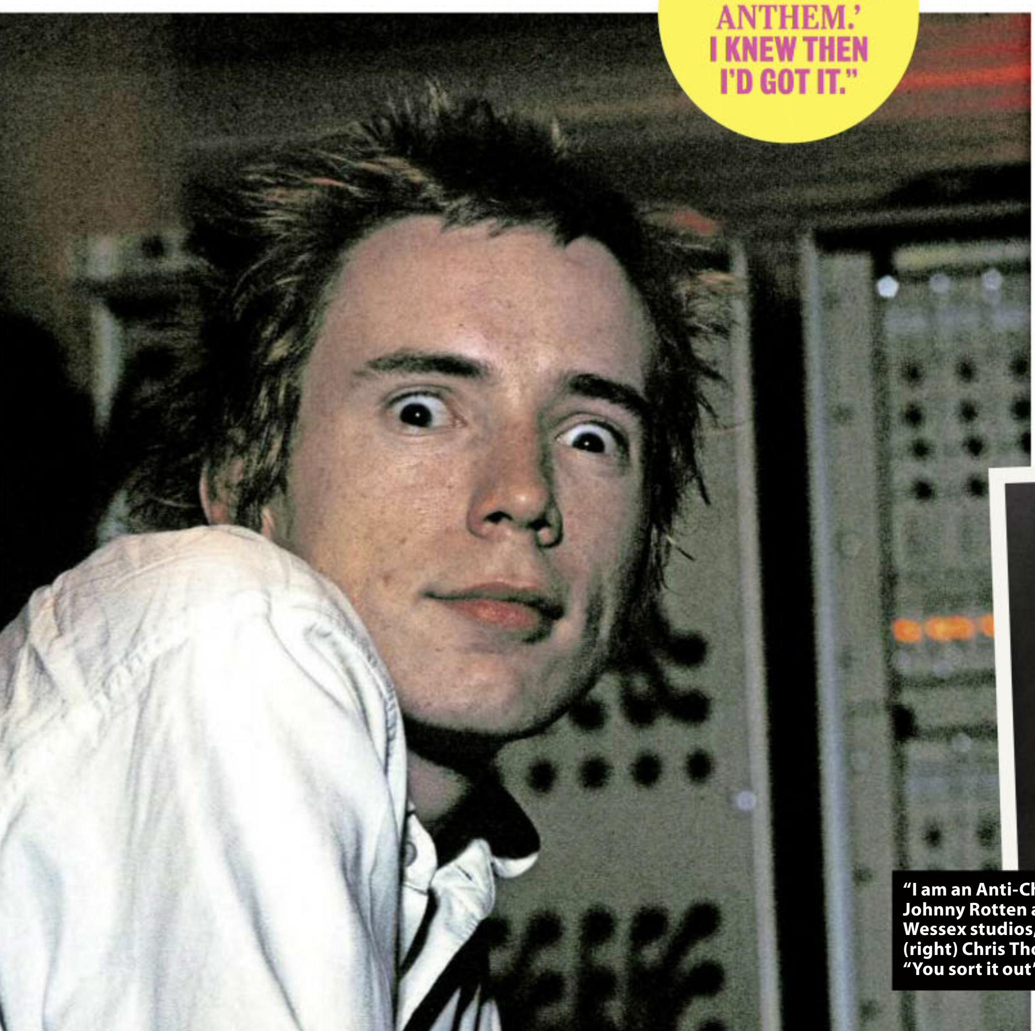
John put in his book that the vocals were done in one take, but they weren't. We even spent an afternoon at The Who's Ramport studios trying to nail them, then went back to Wessex… John gives a performance when he sings, and it was a case of grabbing bits from each take, line by line. I thought it was really essential that you could hear his lyrics. And when John realised I was there to help, we worked hard together to get the vocal just right.

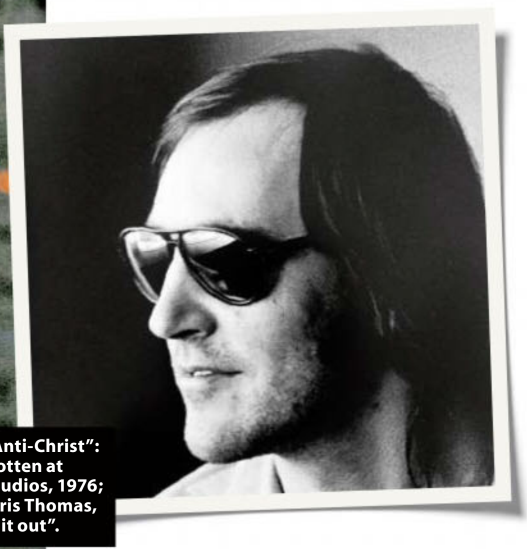
Did Malcolm get involved? No, he didn't have a clue, he was tone deaf, seriously! But he was very encouraging. He wanted it to be done properly and be a great record, we all did. They were easy to work with in that respect. The result was something that summed them up: that line "I am an Anti-Christ…", it has a real sense of threat about it. And the whole construction of the song was fantastic, starting with that guitar riff that says, "Watch out!"

I finished the final mix about two or three o'clock one morning, and only John was there in the control room with me; the others were possibly asleep. I blasted it out really loud, and looked at John and he smiled. His exact words were, "That's our anthem." I knew then I'd got it. I was really pleased. I then cut it with Chris Blair, at Abbey Road, which was EMI's studio.

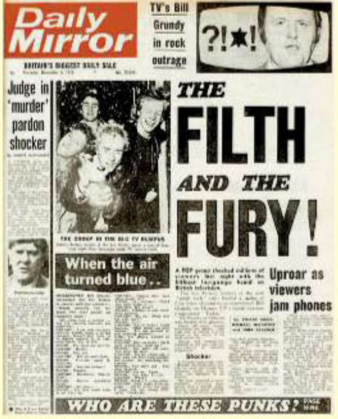
What happened next with Bill Grundy and the [Anarchy] tour, it all seemed completely divorced from what I was doing in the studio. I didn't see them as a punk band, and wasn't interested in any punk movement. I just wanted to make a record that captured what they were all about, and Anarchy In The UK did that. After that Glen left and I was asked to do *Never Mind The Bollocks*, but that's another story…

> "JOHN SAID, 'THAT'S OUR ANTHEM.' I KNEW THEN I'D GOT IT."





"I am an Anti-Christ": Johnny Rotten at Wessex studios, 1976; (right) Chris Thomas, "You sort it out".



Daily Mirror

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST DAILY SALE

TV's Bill Grundy in rock outrage

?!★!

Judge in 'murder' pardon shocker

THE FILTH AND THE FURY!

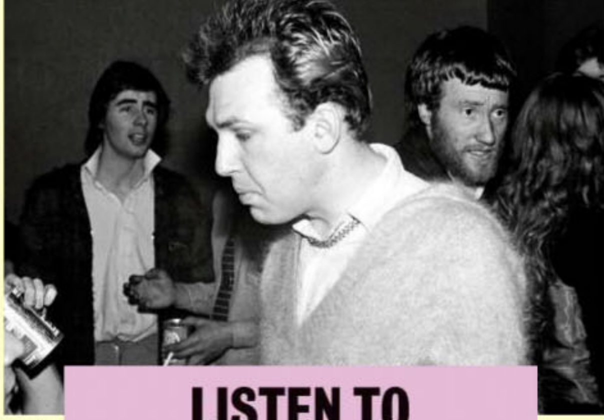
THE GROUP IN THE BIG TV BLUNDER

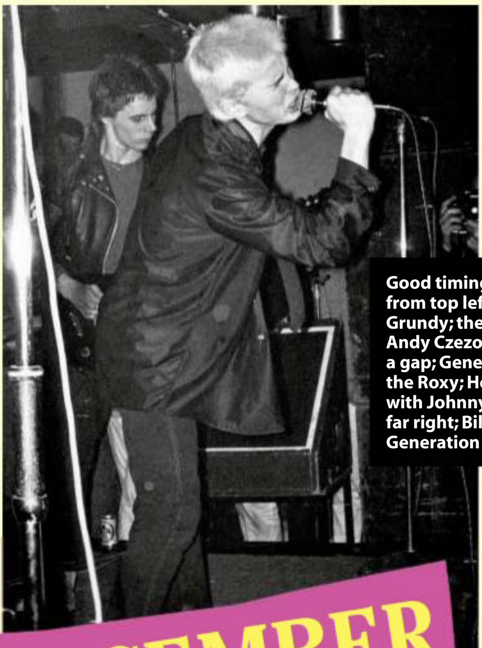
When the air turned blue . .

Uproar as viewers jam phones

Shocker

WHO ARE THESE PUNKS?





Good timing: (clockwise from top left) Rotten on Grundy; the reaction; Andy Czezowski spots a gap; Gene October at the Roxy; Heartbreakers with Johnny Thunders, far right; Billy Idol fronts Generation X at the Roxy.

DECEMBER

...THE ROXY OPENS FOR BUSINESS

POGO A-GO-GO!

London's first punk club looked to have niche appeal. "Then came the Grundy show," remembers promoter **ANDREW CZEZOWSKI** "and everything exploded."

IN 1975, I WAS WORKING AS BOOKKEEPER FOR Vivienne Westwood while Malcolm was in America with the New York Dolls. SEX was their shop but she was the driving force. When the Pistols did their first gigs, I helped unload and take down their equipment. No one thought, This is gonna change the world, but they were good, powerful and different.

I had managed The Damned but, by September, I was managing a band called Chelsea and trying to get gigs. [Singer] Gene October knew the owners of a thuggish East End gangster-type disco in Covent Garden called Chaguaramas [aka 'Shagaramas']. I went to see the owners [one-armed German René Albert and ex-barrister friend] and got a date on December 14. I discovered later they had gone into receivership and lost their licence so any money they could get was a bonus – hence the change of name to the Roxy. By November, Tony James and Billy Idol weren't happy with Gene, so I suggested putting Billy on vocals, they found guitarist Derwood [Bob Andrews] and called themselves Generation X.

Then came the Grundy show. We saw it on television and thought, "That's a bit nuts…" We drove into town to pick up the midnight papers and it was all over the front pages. [Partner] Susan [Carrington] was working for a makeup company and created this range to sell in places like Woolworths. She did a photo shoot with Siouxsie and the Bromley Contingent as her models the day after the Grundy show – and they were still high! Then everything exploded. Susan was sacked, so she became one of the creators of the Roxy with me and Barry Jones.

After the Pistols had only done a few dates on the Anarchy tour, I bumped into Malcolm in a pub on Wardour Street. He was with Leee Childers and some of the Heartbreakers. They had no money as Malcolm couldn't pay them and were crying in their beer. I said, I'll put you on next week. They wanted £100 immediately, which is like a thousand today, but I negotiated them down to thirty quid on condition I give them half immediately. I announced at the Generation X night that we had the Heartbreakers tomorrow. It was crazy. We had a couple of hundred in – more than a full house. Then I promoted another Generation X date on the 21st, which went really well. The Roxy owners were impressed, so we negotiated that I hire the club all the time, starting on January 1 with The Clash. It was going to be the Pistols but Malcolm didn't want them to play because he wanted to build the myth of the naughty Pistols banned everywhere in England.

Suddenly we've got a place to fill seven days a week and all these bands started coming through. At the time, you had the whole post-Grundy anti-punk thing. The GLC were going to close down any venue that put on punk gigs. The Roxy came about purely by need and accident. I never said, "Let's open a club." Like everything, there was no plan. You could do things by the day and we were thinking on our feet. It couldn't have happened sooner than 1976 or later than 1977. The Roxy arrived at exactly the right time."

As told to Kris Needs

"MALCOLM DIDN'T WANT THE PISTOLS TO PLAY BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BUILD THE MYTH."

Ray Stevenson/Rex, Courtesy of Chris Thomas

Rex (3), Getty

LISTEN TO THE BANNED

The Anarchy tour: all seven uncancelled shows.

6/12: LEEDS POLYTECHNIC, LEEDS

"You're just a load of dummies. You're dead," quoth Rotten. "Has the council banned you from clapping?" Local media report the group had smashed a potted plant in the lobby of the Dragonara Hotel. Woo! Anarchy!

9/12: ELECTRIC CIRCUS, MANCHESTER

Tickets promised The Damned and "Johnny Thunder's Heartbreaker". Punters got the Buzzcocks. Police allegedly cordoned the road from the venue to the Pistols hotel so God-fearing public need not be exposed.

14/12: CASTLE CINEMA, CAERPHILLY

Notorious show picketed by around 150 singing Christians, footage of which can be glimpsed in the Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle movie.

19/12: ELECTRIC CIRCUS, MANCHESTER

At least someone's pleased to have the Pistols back, testament to the bond forged with Manc at the landmark June 4 Lesser Free Trade Hall gig.

20/12: WINTER GARDENS, CLEETHORPES

Debbie 'Juvenile' Wilson and Tracie O'Keefe (SEX boutique sales assistants) sold the first issues of the Anarchy In The UK magazine (with Soo Catwoman on the cover) in the Winter Gardens' foyer.

21 & 22/12: WOODS CENTRE, PLYMOUTH

Too removed from London's punk hotbed to feel the Grundy tremors or just dead liberal? Plymouth council even welcomed the Pistols back for the following year's SPOTS (Sex Pistols On Tour Secretly) jaunt.

EPILOGUE

1976's prime movers and what they did next....

VIV ALBERTINE

Consolidated The Slits on The Clash's White Riot tour in May 1977 and helped build the group into post-punk icons, fusing pop, dub and chaos moves on convention-trashing 1979 album, *Cut*. Published her brilliant memoir, Clothes, Music, Boys, in 2014 and is currently working on a follow-up.

ROGER ARMSTRONG

Armstrong and Ted Carroll's indie label Chiswick survived until 1983, having introduced the world to Joe Strummer, Shane MacGowan, Motörhead and Billy Bragg, and crested with The Damned's *Machine Gun Etiquette* LP. Since then, the two have run reissue giant Ace, which just celebrated 40 years in the music business.

CAROLINE COON

Coon briefly took over as The Clash's manager in 1978, after which she guided the script of 1980 Lou Adler-produced punxploitation movie, Ladies And Gentlemen The Fabulous Stains, featuring Steve Jones among other punk faces. In the '80s, she returned to working as a fine artist, while also authoring books and essays.

ANDY CZEZOWSKI

The Roxy Club founder continued to manage ex-Chelsea glam-punks Generation X on their brief, wild ride up and down the charts, and went on to establish a similarly notable nitespot for the '80s and '90s: Brixton's Fridge. He's currently working on a memoir with his partner Susan Carrington.

DON LETTS

After creating The Punk Rock Movie from Super 8 footage, Letts directed iconic promo videos before joining Mick Jones in Big Audio Dynamite. His 1999 Clash doc Westway To The World won a Grammy in 2003, and he continues to work as a film-maker and DJ, with a weekly show on BBC Radio 6 Music.

BARRIE MASTERS

Eddie And The Hot Rods' *Teenage Depression* album came out in 1976, followed by the timeless street romance of the Do Anything You Wanna Do single in 1977. Masters still leads an Eddie And The Hot Rods, and recently formed a spinoff called Class Of '76 with original Rods drummer Steve Nicol.

GLEN MATLOCK

Quit the Pistols in February 1977 to form new wave rockers The Rich Kids. Played on Iggy Pop's 1980 *Soldier* LP; signed to Creation in 1995, a year before the Pistols' multimillion-grossing reunion tours. A fifth solo set with The Philistines is due this year, and he's in a new band with Earl Slick and Slim Jim Phantom.

MARK PERRY

After Sniffin' Glue, Perry became best-known as frontman of Alternative TV, whose Love Lies Limp appeared as a free flexidisc with his 'zine's final issue. ATV's tenth studio album, *Opposing Forces*, appeared last year, while *Viva La Rock'n'Roll*, an anthology of their early work, is out now on Cherry Red.

BERNARD RHODES

Sacked by The Clash in November 1978 due to his unorthodox style, but helped revive their fortunes after *Sandinista!* (*Combat Rock* would reach the US Top 10 in 1982). Since the group's permanent 1986 split, following the Rhodes-helmed *Cut The Crap*, his ventures have been somewhat shrouded in mystery.

PETE SHELLEY

Shelley co-promoted the June 4, '76, Pistols show at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in Manchester and formed Buzzcocks with Howard Devoto, releasing the Spiral Scratch EP in January 1977. Shelley then took over as singer for a priceless run of classic punk pop singles. Buzzcocks' latest album, *The Way*, came out in 2014.

CHRIS SPEDDING

Spedding's reputation as a go-to session ace never dimmed. In 1978, he was key to Jeff Wayne's *The War Of The Worlds*, and in the '80s worked with Paul McCartney, Roger Daltrey, Bryan Ferry/Roxy Music and more. His latest solo album, *Joyland*, featuring a guest appearance from Glen Matlock, appeared in 2015.

CHRIS THOMAS

Together with Bill Price, Thomas produced Sex Pistols' debut album *Never Mind The Bollocks*, then continued to expand his already stellar CV (The Beatles, Roxy Music, Badfinger) with credits for Wings, The Pretenders, Elton John and David Gilmour. In 2013, he produced Irish schoolboy R&B combo The Strypes' *Snapshot*.

DAVE VANIAN

A constant in The Damned's myriad line-ups, exerting a more gothic influence in the '80s as well as fronting rockabilly side project The Phantom Chords. The Damned, with Vanian and Captain Sensible, will celebrate their 40th anniversary in May with a special show at the Royal Albert Hall.

LONDON'S PUNKY PARTY

Gabba Gabba Hayes! (And Stockwell, and Fulham...): Ramones visit the Rough Trade shop in Ladbroke Grove, August, 1976.

Punk's London heritage is hailed in year-long, Lottery-funded shindig.

PUNK LONDON: 40 YEARS OF Subversive Culture is a pan-capital celebration of punk that embraces events throughout 2016. Highlights include a Punk London season at the BFI Southbank in August curated by Don Letts, with a special showing of Derek Jarman's Jubilee and an African Odysseys event highlighting the intersections between the Jamaican music scene and punk.

Also celebrating a birthday, Rough Trade turns 40 in 2016, and RT40 events will commemorate the 1976 opening of the Rough Trade shop, subsequently a key facilitator of Britain's nascent punk, post-punk and indie music scenes.

Punk London kicks off shortly with the Resolution Festival at Oxford Street's 100 Club (January 4-14), with bands including The Ramonas, The Members, Anti-Nowhere League, GBH and 999. Find out more at **www.punk.london** and www.the100club.co.uk.

Walt Davidson, Tom Sheehan, Ace Records, Andy Holdsworth, David Bruce, Caroline Coon, Starstock, Courtesy of Classic albums: *Never Mind The Bollocks*

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY JENNY BULLEY

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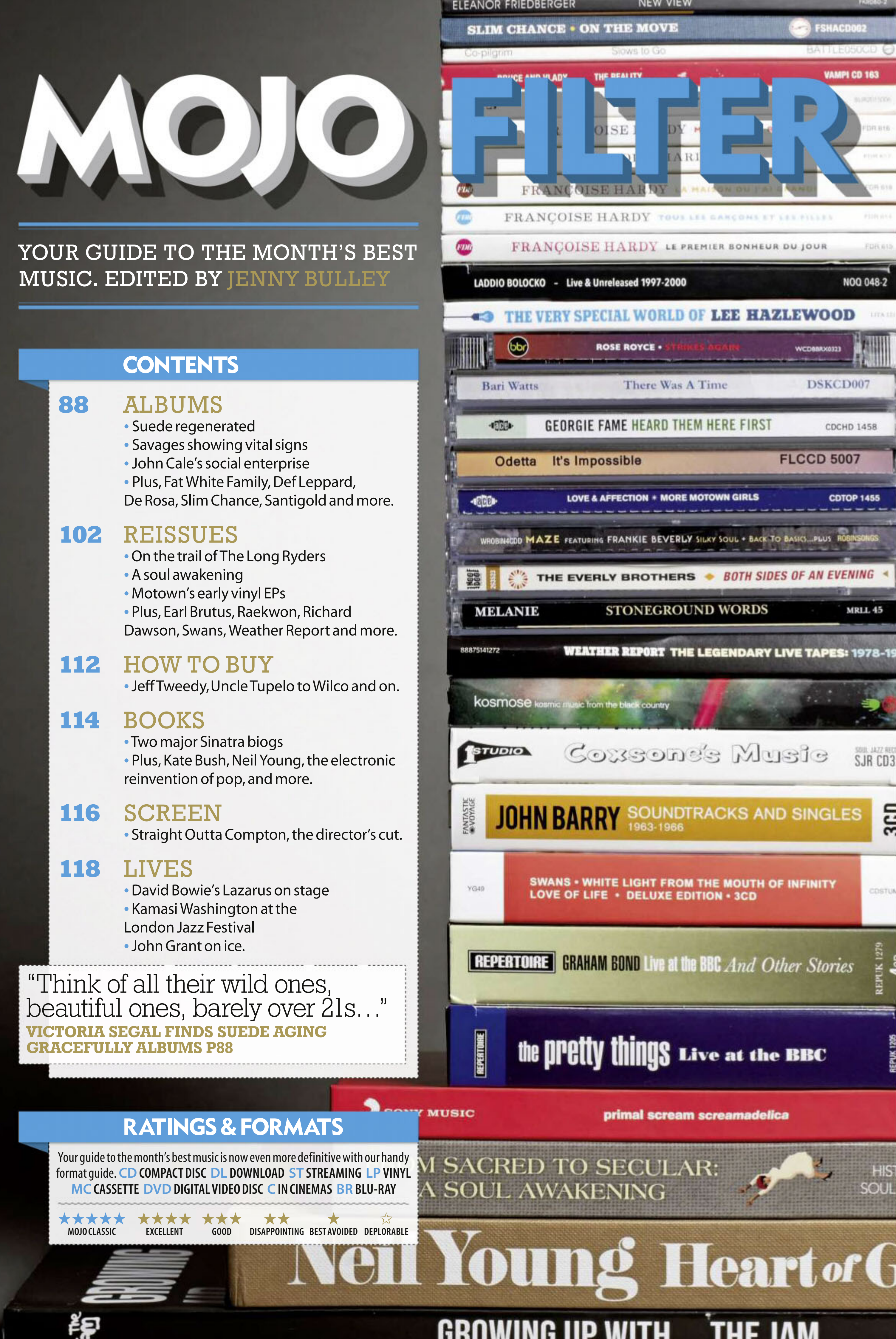
> "Think of all their wild ones, beautiful ones, barely over 21s…"
>
> **VICTORIA SEGAL FINDS SUEDE AGING GRACEFULLY ALBUMS P88**

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide. **CD** COMPACT DISC **DL** DOWNLOAD **ST** STREAMING **LP** VINYL **MC** CASSETTE **DVD** DIGITAL VIDEO DISC **C** IN CINEMAS **BR** BLU-RAY

★★★★★ MOJO CLASSIC ★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ BEST AVOIDED ☆ DEPLORABLE



ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER NEW VIEW
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FROM SACRED TO SECULAR: A SOUL AWAKENING
Neil Young Heart of G
GROWING UP WITH THE JAM

Fashionably late

1990s outliers continue their impressive regeneration with a second post-break album. By Victoria Segal. Illustration by Think Strange.

Suede

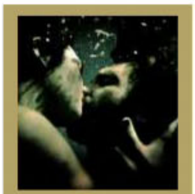
★★★★

Night Thoughts

WARNER BROS/SUEDE LTD. CD/DL/LP

It's a very Suede title. Twenty years ago, when the band were in their nylon-shirted pomp, *Night Thoughts* would have immediately implied filthy assignations behind lock-ups or down stairwells, red lightbulbs flickering behind suburban nets, furtive pre-dawn phone calls to all the wrong people. Now, however, five years into Suede's admirably strong and graceful comeback, the title is more suggestive of 3am non-stop neurotic cabaret, or as singer Brett Anderson puts it, "those times when you are lying in bed wondering what the fuck you're supposed to be doing, that waking nightmare of real life."

After their 11-year recording break, 2013's *Bloodsports* was hardly shy and tentative, but Anderson describes it as a "neat little rock record", and compared with this follow-up, it is. *Night Thoughts* is the work of a band at full beam, once again stretching out and reminding themselves of what they can do. Suede always had ambitions beyond shaking their bits to the hits, despite their abundant talents in that area. The febrile pop of Animal Nitrate or The Drowners might have issued their first irresistible demands for attention, but the mood and pacing of their 1993 debut album was warped by the theatrical balladry of Pantomime Horse or She's Not Dead. Their hunt for a big, transcendent kind of beauty expanded with 1994's *Dog Man Star*, complete with its closing suite of tympani-flashing ballads, and that's the attitude reactivated here. "Too scared to look down through my fingers," sings Anderson on the shuddering Tightrope, Richard Oakes's guitar treacherously shiny beneath him, but this is a band carrying off a balancing act between their past and present in the grandest style.



BACK STORY: EVERYTHING WILL FOLLOW

- Roger Sargent's film to accompany *Night Thoughts* premiered along with the album at Suede's London Roundhouse shows on November 13-14, 2015. The band performed behind a screen as the dramatic tale of love and death unfolded in front of them. For Anderson, the immersive aspects of an album are vital: "I still think there's huge armies of music fans out there who love being enveloped by the world of an album. All my favourite albums are very complete pieces, from *Never Mind The Bollocks* to *Music For Airports*. They take you somewhere, and that's what I've always wanted to do."

Recorded with long-time associate Ed Buller and a full string section in Belgium and London, Suede's seventh album was partly inspired by Frank Sinatra's nocturnal sorrows on *In The Wee Small Hours*. The band wanted their new mood indigo to sound coherent, conceptual, complete – a "bloody-minded" reaction to the modern way of consuming music. Underlining this is the dark accompanying film by Roger Sargent, which tells a story, song by song, of love, loss and violence. There's a man, a woman, a child, the sea, impending doom: it fits beautifully. Yet even without the unifying visuals, *Night Thoughts* stands its ground.

Think of all their wild ones, beautiful ones, barely over 21s, and it's obvious that youth has always been important to Suede. The role of Bostik-hungry waifs, jeered at by the straight world for their pretty hair and charity-shop shirts, isn't really open to them any longer. Anderson's now a father. He's probably attended a soft play centre recently. No longer so young, nor so gone, Suede find themselves operating in a very grown-up present. If the adolescent dream of adulthood is unlimited freedom and crazed transgression – ideas to which the singer was particularly committed in the '90s – these songs face the less glamorous realities of getting older: sharpened nostalgia, increased fear, heightened awareness of time, a new understanding of your place in the world, and the place of those around you.

KEY TRACKS

- When You Are Young
- No Tomorrow
- What I'm Trying To Tell You
- I Don't Know How To Reach You

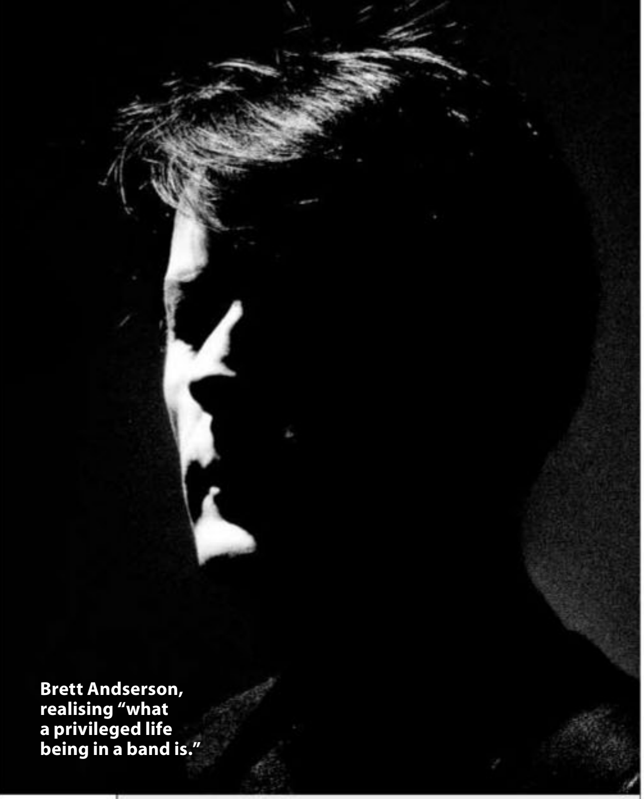
And so family hangs heavy over *Night Thoughts*. What I'm Trying To Tell You, with its chilly late-Abba chug, sounds almost comically self-deprecating thanks to its snappy rhyming – but it's a message for Anderson's young son, the singer listing his own faults as a kind of pre-emptive plea for compassion. "I don't know the meaning of much/I never make the best impressions/And I don't have the means of expression/To explain my obsessions," he sings. I Don't Know How To Reach You, meanwhile, comes from the perspective of a father losing his grip on his growing son – Slipping Through My Fingers, Haywards Heath edition.

There's a similar mirroring with the martial orchestrations and disturbing childhood terrors of When You Are Young, reprised as When You Were Young, the shift in tense emphasising different perspectives, flying time. Yet their real trick, and it's a great one, is to apply the blazing commitment of their earlier work to these songs so they never feel drearily "mature". It's easiest on a track such as Like Kids, its euphoric, rabble-rousing chorus as romantic as New Generation, or the gothic guitars and us-them theatrics of Outsiders. No Tomorrow, though, starting out like Sylvia by Focus, deals with the heavy subject of the depression suffered by Anderson's father with real fire. Anderson has a famously idiosyncratic lyrical lexicon, which, for all its brilliant flashes, can let him down. Here, though, he's at his best: "Too long have I sat outside and smoked/I know all the neighbours' cars."

> "FIVE YEARS INTO SUEDE'S STRONG AND GRACEFUL COMEBACK, THE TITLE IS MORE SUGGESTIVE OF 3AM NON-STOP NEUROTIC CABARET."

There are undoubted, unmistakable resonances with *Dog Man Star*. A kids' choir na-na-naing on No Tomorrow recalls the urchin chorus at the end of We Are The Pigs. Closing track The Fur And The Feathers is a full-hearted, bouquet-strewn ballad about "the thrill of the chase" that echoes the over-the-top emotion-spill of Still Life. Yet *Night Thoughts* never feels like the work of a band chasing past glories. In fact, Anderson tells MOJO that Suede Mark II's impetus comes from their "Stalinesque" desire to erase their shaky final years, and say "the last two Suede records weren't as good as they should have been… these were the kind of records we should have been making." They might not be able to change the past, but *Night Thoughts* is the work of a band very much at home in the here and now, all the while looking forward. Still something else, still something wonderful.

BRETT TALKS! SUEDE HEAD ON REGRETS, PARENTHOOD AND THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING IN A BAND.



Brett Andserson, realising "what a privileged life being in a band is."

"There's things I bitterly regret"

Brett Anderson speaks to Victoria Segal.

What does the title refer to?

"I have been listening to Frank Sinatra's *In The Wee Small Hours*, and that's very thematically linked, so much so that people have said it's the first ever concept album. You enter this world of whisky-soaked regret at two or three in the morning. It paints this very vivid picture and I suppose I was thinking of that when I came up with the title *Night Thoughts*. Being alone in the world when everyone's asleep. The idea of the cover comes from that. That sense of adult terror – that you're just a child in a huge world. Everyone is just a child playing these huge roles."

Is the self-deprecating What I'm Trying To Tell You in character?

"I suppose a lot of the album is about parenthood and it's a song for my boy – a message to listen to when he's older. It's kind of a confessional song – looking at faults in my personality, and saying, Was it so bad? I Don't Know How To Reach You is supposed to be the voice of my father looking at our relationship. Being a parent makes you look at your role as a child as well, which is what lots of this album is about."

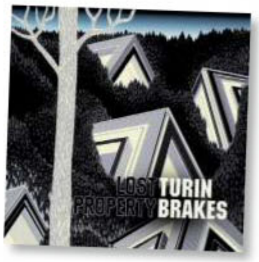
Was *Night Thoughts* easier to make than its predecessor *Bloodsports*?

"I wouldn't say it was as hard as *Bloodsports* but we go through a lot of conflict with the band when we're writing. Luckily, as people we are able to not let the conflict get too personal. When we were younger we didn't have the emotional tools to do that – hence the fact that people leave bands. That's why bands split up because young men go through this intensely hard period and face these huge changes in their lives and they don't have the emotional tools to deal with it. As you get older – the beauty of aging! – you acquire these tools."

So is being in a band like university – something people should really do when they're older?

"One of the good things about reforming is realising what a privileged life being in a band is, which you don't really appreciate being young. I don't have any issues with the past. There's things I bitterly regret but everyone does. Specifically, with the history of Suede, I wonder where we would have gone as a band if Bernard had stayed. It's one of those alternative history things that obviously plays on my mind. I'd be a liar if I said I didn't think about it. But you can't go back and fix these things – they are unfixable."

Sarah Cass



Turin Brakes

★★★★

Lost Property

COOKING VINYL. CD/DL/LP

Balham duo rekindle early spark on seventh album.

The aphorism that pioneers seldom garner the respect of their imitators could have been written for Turin Brakes. Squeezed between post-Britpop and the Britfolk revival, *The Optimist LP*'s success in 2001 sent A&R men scurrying into London's acoustic clubs while also whetting listeners' ears for the imminent arrival of Devendra Banhart and Jose Gonzalez. Aside from 2003's follow-up, *Ether Song*, none of their subsequent albums have had the same impact, and while *Lost Property* doesn't deviate from the formula – folksy, acoustic-ish guitar rock – it seems the duo have finally given up trying to chase that early success and just got on with making an album regardless. There's a warmth and carefree spirit to 96, Rome and myriad others that hasn't always been there down the years, and they've seldom bettered Save You. It really is heart-warming to have them back on point.

Andy Fyfe

Adele

★★★

25

XL. CD/DL/LP

Hello, is it her you're looking for? Sales figures say yes.

She has measured out her life with coffee-table tunes: after *19* and *21*, here is *25*, another milestone in the now 27-year-old Adele's successfully packaged emotional development. Never one for youthful giddiness, her third album is strikingly authoritative, tending towards the imperious even when expressing vulnerability yet rarely coming over as soullessly efficient. The regal piano balladry is forgettable – Remedy, for example – but there's a welcome lighter touch on the whippy Send My Love (To Your New Lover), a bitter little song that cuts the prettiness of Wyclef's Gone Till November with a dose of romantic bile. I Miss You, the most left-of-centre track, updates her classic collection with echoing vocals and pattering beats, while River Lea, a rolling churchy tribute to her neighbourhood produced by Danger Mouse, adds a pleasing geographical specificity to these big, universal songs. For Adele, *25* looks like being another very good year.

Victoria Segal

Nevermen

★★★★

Nevermen

LEX/IPECAC. CD/DL/LP

Together at last – Mike Patton, Tunde Adebimpe and Adam 'Doseone' Drucker.

One of the many excellent things about this delightfully chewy collaboration is that it does sometimes manage to sound like the three principals' best-known bands playing in the same room at once. Since Faith No More, TV On The Radio and cLOUDDEAD all respectively occupy the more listener-friendly end of each party's creative spectrum, fears of a wilfully indulgent three-way wig-out can be gratefully set aside. In an only slightly different world, the hook-heavy pop rigour of Dark Ear, Wrong Animal Right Trap and Mr Mistake would make them daytime radio staples. And while this album's eight-year gestation period could easily have left its vocal and production flourishes sounding a little out of date, it actually gives the whole project a timeless quality, establishing Patton, Adebimpe and Drucker as the CSN of avant-rap.

Ben Thompson

Shearwater

★★★★

Jet Plane And Oxbow

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Fifteen years in, Jonathan Meiburg's Austin crew makes high-octane breakthrough.

If you listen to Shearwater's eleventh album while driving down the highway at night – and really, that's how you should be listening to it – then you're pretty much guaranteed to get a speeding ticket, such is its astonishing, propulsive power. A defiant, moody exploration of the magic and menace of technology, *Jet Plane And Oxbow* pulls together crisp, motorik grooves, dirty great guitar riffs and arms-aloft choruses. What's so special about these songs, though, is their spaciousness; they're expansive but not blustery, thanks in part to film composer and percussionist Brian Reitzell. The '80s loom large here – Jonathan Meiburg cites *Big Science* and *Scary Monsters* as influences (you'll even hear the sounds of such lost instruments as rototoms if you listen closely). But the electrical charge infused in these songs insists on the present moment, much like an unexpected static shock.

Sophie Harris

Shearwater's Jonathan Meiburg, driving in the fast lane.

Lucinda Williams

★★★

The Ghosts Of Highway 20

HIGHWAY 20/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL

Twelfth time around for confessional alt country singer/songwriter.

The Highway 20 runs through Lucinda Williams's home state of Louisiana. Here she delivers 12 snapshots of life inspired by 'the ghosts' who frequent the highway and its exit ramps, plus two sympathetic cover versions. Alongside Bruce Springsteen's Factory is a new take on Woody Guthrie's House Of Earth, where Williams voices a prostitute grimly determined to send every customer home with a new set of bedroom skills. Both songs fit this long, bleak road trip, where Williams and her wounded voice share the driving with co-producer Greg Leisz's spooked-sounding pedal steel. If the alcoholic's lament Death Came teeters close to parody, then the bare-boned country pop of Place In My Heart and Bitter Memory offer some much needed respite. Thankfully, the valedictory 12:44-minute Faith & Grace suggests the night receding, the dawn sun glinting off the tarmac and the hope of a new and better day.

Mark Blake

Ty Segall

★★★

Emotional Mugger

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP/MC

Psychedelic-garage wunderkind gets wonderfully weird.

With advance publicity describing Segall's latest as "bleak", fans might anticipate a return to the acoustic drones of 2013's *Sleeper*. But *Emotional Mugger* is a wilder, weirder beast, pitting his signature ear-bleeding heavy psych-rock squall against electronic mischief and lurching, tricky tempo changes. If 2014's *Manipulator* seemed to tidy his more avant leanings, *Emotional Mugger* lets that freak flag fly, packed with wilful twists and songs that sound like Silver Apples duking it out with Sabbath (Mandy Cream) or King Crimson gone glam (California Hills). It's enough to make Segall's hardcore record collector demographic weep with joy, but, nutty as *Emotional Mugger* is, it's a joyful trip. Meanwhile, Diversion – which delivers needling weirdo-pop with Beatlesque harmonies battling for earspace over crooning oscillators and super-distorted biker-rock riffs – is up there with Segall's very best.

Stevie Chick

Daughter

★★★

Not To Disappear

4AD. CD/DL/LP

Intriguing and disorientating return from gloomy post-rockers.

Having emerged in 2013 with the critically-acclaimed *If You Leave?*, London three-piece Daughter have upped the ante. Working with War On Drugs producer Nicolas Vernhes, *Not To Disappear* trades in metal-scorched guitar curlicues and the type of ethereal harmonies that played out so well in the early '90s shoegazing scene by Ride et al. Though arriving with less of a cacophonous attack, their crush of distortion and Elena Tonra's swooning vocals is rooted in the same psychedelic heartland – How blends tendril-like riffs with crashing percussion; Alone/With You is a disorientating and bleak ode to solitude ("I hate sleeping with you, because you are never there") underpinned by pulsing synths. The mood throughout, as on No Care's haunting piano, is maudlin and reflective, delivering a delicious soundtrack to those dark winter afternoons with the curtains drawn.

Matt Allen

De Rosa

★★★★

Weem

ROCK ACTION. CD/DL/LP

The Lanarkshire group's second album since their reformation in 2009.

It's a decade since De Rosa were likened to the Pixies and The Go-Betweens, but the guitar outbursts that ripped through singles like Camera are far more contained now. The exceptional songs of Martin Henry are served by the trio's undemonstrative guitar, bass and drums being augmented by keyboards, glockenspiel and harp. His singing voice evokes Malcolm Middleton although he also intones sweet harmonies with a 'female' singer – amazingly, himself singing falsetto. On Lanes, the sinuous melodic lines sung over parade ground drum rolls suggest Efterklang. Henry's lyrics explore themes of ancestry and identity, and grim humour on Prelude To Entropic Doom, with "Bury me on your path/Walking over my grave/Is the best cenotaph", while the end of a relationship is marked on Chip On My Shoulder with the dazed lines, "You left, it happened/I don't know what happens now."

Mike Barnes

Fat White Family

★★★★

Songs For Our Mothers

WITHOUT CONSENT. CD/DL/LP

Most obnoxious space rock album ever?

SONGS
for our
MOTHERS

Like Happy Mondays and Donald Cammell's Performance, Stockwell's Fat Whites so totally nailed that vibe of narcotic-sodden Anglo-rock deviance that it rather looked as if they wouldn't prevail long enough to follow up 2013's only album thus far, *Champagne Holocaust*. The misleadingly titled *Songs For Our Mothers* kicks off brightly with a slinky disco groove reminiscent of '76-vintage Can, but soon plummets into a disturbed and profoundly disturbing fug: at the prettier end, Love Is The Crack offers an opiated take on glam balladry; less wholesomely, Duce's medieval funeral dirge is agonising. Lias Saoudi's lyrical fascinations with serial killers (When Shipman Decides), the Third Reich (unsettling acoustic lament Goodbye Goebbels) and hard drugs (Tinfoil Deathstar) take the whole thing to the far perimeters of listenability. Yet this Family album goes towards capturing the band's undeniable genius, in music that lingers like the most terrifying dream.

Andrew Perry

Love vigilantes: Savages see a light amid the darkness.

Dustin Cohen

If you want blood

The Anglo-French quartet have got it. Lock up your sons and daughters, says Keith Cameron.

Savages

★★★★

Adore Life

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

IN BETWEEN the wind-tunnel thrill of some headline-grabbing early live shows and making *Silence Yourself*, 2013's debut album, Savages lost perspective on how best to amplify their post-punk shapes – and in the process became unlikely figures of fun. Artful pretensions are easily mocked, especially when worn quite literally on your album sleeve with a stern essay about falling prey to the "constant distraction" of the modern world. But more problematic was an arid, pompous sonic landscape which neutered some prime weapons – Fay Milton's drums and Gemma Thompson's guitar – and perverse sequencing which offered the best songs at the end as if in reward for slogging through the existential wasteland. Contrary to a churlish (social) media depiction, Savages' didn't need to 'loosen up'; intensity was their *raison d'être*. Some sweat and blood on their monochrome visage, however, might help.

Almost inevitably, *Adore Life* overcompensates, but in a good way. This is Savages' love album: every song concerns the mental turmoil or the physical push and shove of *l'amour fou*. Accordingly, in contrast to its predecessor's clinical separation, producer Johnny Hostile presents a band in the raw, constituent parts fighting for ear-space like angry wasps, revealing a more engaging collective personality than hitherto. Amid opener The Answer's foaming switchbacks, Jehnny Beth trills gleefully, "If you don't love me/You don't love any*bodyy*!", before hurling herself on top of the emotional barbed wire. There are sing-alongs ("You are, you are/A sad, sad person") and at times it gets deliciously silly, such as When In Love where Beth demands "I want your fingers down my throat" despite having already decided "I hate your taste in music." She sounds like Piaf on poppers, like she's enjoying herself; it suits her, and the feeling is mutual.

In this song, as elsewhere, the psychotic blues of The Gun Club is a key reference point, further indication of the *nouveau grave* straitjacket unbuttoning. Perhaps most surprising is how frequently Savages recast their instinctive melodramatic stampede over the album's 10 tracks – Adore is a pathos-sodden lighters-out anthem worthy of Patti Smith; T.I.W.Y.G. ("This is what you get when you mess with love") powers on Ayse Hassan's shredding bassline – to the extent where even Beth's smouldering oath on closer Mechanics ("When I take a man to sleep over/Pain and pleasure will touch my hand") successfully navigates the hairline betwixt credulity and farce.

In philosophical terms, "Love is a disease/The strongest addiction I know" hardly represents stop-press news. But Savages' passion now feels contagious, a useful quality for bolstering their cult appeal. As with others before them, they discovered it isn't easy to intellectualise rock's feral instincts. The answer was there all along, screaming through their veins.

Upstate girl: Eleanor Friedberger feels no fret.

Hello birds, hello trees

Former Fiery Furnace goes rad in the country. By Stevie Chick.

Eleanor Friedberger

★★★★

New View

FRENCHKISS. CD/DL/LP

ARTISTS FROM the Big Apple have traditionally viewed upstate New York – that voluminous sub-suburban belt of green surrounding Manhattan like a forest of bucolic chill – as somewhere to pull their heads and their ideas together. Whether it's Dylan and The Band cutting their Basement Tapes in Woodstock, or Mercury Rev revitalising themselves in the Catskill Mountains with their *Deserter's Songs*, upstate is the East Coast's Laurel Canyon, a refuge forartists looking to take stock.

And so it is for Eleanor Friedberger. After 15 years toiling in the hipster hive that is Brooklyn, Friedberger made her pilgrimage upstate shortly before beginning work on her third solo album, with, the lyrics suggest, some angst to exorcise. Her solo career has already seemed an exercise in unwinding, in decompression, following the proggy twists and giddy complexity of Fiery Furnaces, the band she led with brother Matthew until 2011. On her solo debut *Last Summer* and 2013 follow-up *Personal Record*, Friedberger swapped askew concepts and itchy, wiry bustle for openness and a concise clarity of melody, a change that suited her well.

Recorded in a converted barn owned by producer Clemens Knieper near the Hudson River, *New View* furthers Friedberger's quest to declutter, finding great pop and occasional profundity in getting to the point and letting her tunes ring clear. Navigating a ludic path between '70s singer-songwriter introspection, classic AM radio pop and the left-handed charm of the underground, the album delivers an unvarnished soft-rock that makes any vintage reference points feel contemporary.

NEW VIEW
ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER

Her songs, meanwhile, essay heartbreak and healing, but *New View* never resorts to drab confessionals or self-pity, its lyrics witty and subtly moving. Open Season is haunted by a broken relationship Friedberger nails in seven pithy words: "It's as though I lost my voice." Sweetest Girl, meanwhile, finds her pleading the titular character to "Stop crying so I won't start", her band's earthy crunch (equally indebted to Crazy Horse and *Crooked Rain*-era Pavement) urging the song's broken heart on to brighter times. Elsewhere, Friedberger occasionally errs lyrically towards the glib, but even then her melodic sureness wins out.

New View peaks on closer A Long Walk, likening the arc of a relationship to a rural ramble. The ebullient, romantic lyric draws to a bittersweet close – "I stopped to catch my breath and turning 'round, you're gone/…you know I'd bend to kiss the ground we walked upon" – but the warm, bubbling interplay of the music is infectious, Friedberger and band exchanging melodic bristles, rumbles and ripples of guitar, the sort of economic and playful flourishes The Band dispensed at their height. It's in such moments that *New View*'s gift for unforced joy rises to the surface, and those moments are precious indeed.

Villagers

★★★★

Where Have You Been All My Life?

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Conor O'Brien revisits his back catalogue in one day at London's RAK Studio.

Having hit a restrained peak on 2015's lovelorn third album *Darling Arithmetic*, Villagers' notoriously shy one-man-army Conor O'Brien decided to extend its pared-back approach. While these first or second takes with his live band cull half their material from that LP's heart-on-sleeve ruminations, the relative simplicity of the fingerpicked guitars, delicate keys and plucked double bass set-up breathe fresh life into its poetically abstracted predecessors. They also highlight a swirling undercurrent of menace on My Lighthouse's peeled corpse and the self-immolation of Memoir (written for Charlotte Gainsbourg's *Stage Whisper*). At first disguised by O'Brien's emotive falsetto, it's left hovering eerily in the ether on a closing cover of Jimmy Webb's Wichita Lineman. The wiry Dubliner is stealthily building a similarly indelible songbook.

Andy Cowan

The Temperance Movement

★★★

White Bear

EARACHE. CD/DL/LP

British blues-rock traditionalists deliver album number two.

Such classic rock as peddled by The Temperance Movement may have its peaks and troughs but it never disappears – as John Peel once remarked, hard rock is to the British heartlands what country and western is to middle America. Authenticity is key then, and The Temperance Movement sound like something unearthed from The Old Grey Whistle Test circa 1972. Or, in shorthand, The Black Crowes. The whiff of sweat, smoke and patchouli is tangible. At their best – the boogie of Get Yourself Free, the economical, air-kicking strut of Modern Massacre – they recall early Aerosmith, the hard as nails blues-rock of Nazareth or the Faces letting fly, and singer Phil Campbell certainly has the perfectly grizzled voice; at worst, we're reminded of Reef's collective simian-swagger. Such a wealth of comparisons surely illustrates The Temperance Movement's lack of original ideas, yet on a basic, gut-punching level they deliver with inarguable aplomb.

Ben Myers

Def Leppard

★★★

Def Leppard

EARMUSIC. CD/DL/LP

"First one we've ever made with no one looking over our shoulders," says Joe Elliott.

DEF LEPPARD

Their 2013 Vegas residency opening for themselves as 'Ded Flatbird' was fun and all, but sooner or later Def Leppard had to pick up where 2008's less-than-glittering *Songs From The Sparkle Lounge* left off. Their self-titled 11th album is certainly a happier chapter in their storied, bruising career, much of the airbrushed pop-metal nous that elevated 1983's *Pyromania* and 1987's *Hysteria* back in evidence. Highlights include Dangerous, which re-jigs the chorus of previous Leps smash Photograph, and the bass-heavy groover Man Enough, a song whose near-forensic study of Queen's Another One Bites The Dust could hardly be more plain. "If you cast the first stone/I will roll it away," sings Elliott on We Belong, playing fast and loose with his Bible stories, but it's still a joy to lose yourself in the song's candyfloss cloud of gentle air-pumping.

James McNair

Night Beats

★★★★

Who Sold My Generation

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Mind-bending, yet warm-hearted third album from the Seattle trio.

From the historic sample questioning the future of the tape recorder that opens the record, to their analogue instruments and even their clanging '60s schoolboy puns (see album title), Night Beats view the world through a classic filter. Yet nostalgia is not the aim – instead, they utilise their vintage psychedelia to ferment something new and individual. Thus, *Who Sold My Generation* is bathed in a warm fuzz perfected in 1966 yet fizzes with 21st century attitude too. Power Child pounds with unhinged percussion, Porque Mañana and Burn To Breath sprawl with an enveloping sun-kissed, trippy pop, while twitchy closer Egypt Berry even nods to Liverpool psych peers Clinic. The trio's approach naturally invokes comparison to their forebears, but pleasingly, Night Beats are distilling a strong vintage of their own.

Paul Stokes

NIGHT BEATS
WHO SOLD MY GENERATION

The Besnard Lakes

★★★

A Coliseum Complex Museum

JAGJAGUWAR. CD/DL/LP

Fifth album from Montreal-based purveyors of richly textured, soaring psych-pop.

Named after the rustic Saskatchewan locale where band mainstays Jace Lasek and his wife Olga Goreas, retreat every summer to write music, Besnard Lakes admit to the diverse influence of Prince and My Bloody Valentine, yet proffer a very Canadian brand of ethereal guitar rock. Nodding, tangentially, to the likes of The Broken Social Scene and The Dears, they retain a shimmering, ghostly signature of their own – largely the result of Lasek's facility for empyrean falsetto vocals – and, as was the case on 2013's *Until in Excess, Imperceptible UFO*, seem poised equidistant between the mellifluousness of '70s Beach Boys and prog rock opacity. Thus, opener The Bray Road Beast could be Panda Bear covering Low beneath a penumbra of plangent, reverb-caressed guitar lines, while The Golden Lion's soaring harmonies, churning riffs and hairpin-turn chord changes suggest a sparkier, less pharmaceutically numbed Spiritualized.

David Sheppard

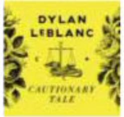
Dylan LeBlanc

★★★★

Cautionary Tale

SINGLE LOCK. CD/DL/LP

Third outing from troubled Muscle Shoals troubadour.



LeBlanc hit big with his first two albums of plaintive Southern pain. With a dislocated background and rehab in high school, he delivered songs of haunted melancholy that had him hailed as a *Harvest*-era Neil Young. But his fragile ego buckled at success, he sank into a blur of booze, and returned to Muscle Shoals to write it out. The upshot shocks with unexpected new ground. Roll The Dice is gloriously melodic; Look How Far We've Come has a tough new authority, a cool Alabama drawl against pedal steel; and I'm Moving On is a peach, LeBlanc keening with all the broken power of Roy Orbison. More startling, tracks like The Easy Way Out leaven the insight with soaring, airy soul: "The easy way out is a dangerous path/And no one knows it like I do." And our boy's still 23.

Glyn Brown

Dylan LeBlanc: not taking the easy way out.

Abraham Rowe Photography

FLATS AND SHARPS
KING OF MY MIND

Flats And Sharps

★★★★

King Of My Mind

PROPER. CD/DL/LP

Debut album from a youthful bluegrass quintet.

West Coast? Most certainly. For this fivesome hail from Penzance, but instead of praising the joys of surf, they've opted to connect with the music of Appalachia. It's been four years since the original four members of the band – Kirk Bowman (banjo), Mikey Ponsford (mandolin), Josh Warner (guitar) and Liam Fitzharris (double bass) – first set out to enlighten fellow Cornishmen in the ways of Bill Monroe. Since that time, fiddle player Danny Hart has been added to the line-up and, in the wake of a few hundred gigs, Flats And Sharps have broadened their musical approach, adding re-fashioned covers of such songs as Carole King's Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow, Jesse Fuller's Nine-ty-Nine Years and Gillian Welch's Caleb Meyer to their stock of well-honed originals, The picking is exhilarating, the harmony vocals precise. You can but admire.

Fred Dellar

The High Llamas

★★★

Here Come The Rattling Trees

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Dreamlike pop concept album set in SE15.

The High Llamas

The High Llamas staged a performance of *Here Come The Rattling Trees* with actors in a south London pub in 2014. Chief songwriter Sean O'Hagan's story explores changing times and the timeless conflict between big business and ordinary people. Never ones to break sweat, the group's fusion of sleepy-sounding vibraphones and Hawaiian guitars sounds even more sleepy than on their preceding nine albums, including the last, 2011's *Talahomi Way*. Decorator Recalls and Plumber Recalls are more poignant than their titles suggest; imagine the incidental music in a kids' TV cartoon from the era of Edward Heath and The Three-Day Week. The title track, meanwhile, transports O'Hagan's familiar Brian Wilson-inspired baroque pop from sunny California to Peckham High Street. It's the standout moment on an album whose gentle charm fades a little before the final curtain falls.

Mark Blake

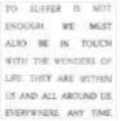
Robert Stillman

★★★★

Rainbow

ORINDAL. CD/DL/LP

Kent-based one-man-band breaks through the heavy weather.


TO SUFFER IS NOT ENOUGH WE MUST ALSO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE WONDERS OF LIFE THEY ARE WITHIN US AND ALL AROUND US EVERYWHERE ANY TIME

Maine-born composer and lecturer Robert Stillman has been quietly crafting beautifully arcane instrumentals and sound collages for over 10 years, his rustic arrangements seeming to stem from a reimagined pre-war America: part New Orleans funeral march; part Harry Partch experiment; part *Music From Big Pink*. His seventh solo release finds him at his most restrained and reflective, searching for peace after four years of emotional turmoil following the loss of a family member. Working alone, Stillman multitracks mournful tenor saxophone, saloon bar piano and ambling percussion to form a deeply textured six-part suite that, at times, sounds like Pharaoh Sanders playing a Moondog madrigal. Like the celestial phenomena of its title, the power of *Rainbow* is in Stillman's ability to bridge the album's weather-beaten foundations with elegant surges of brightness and colour. A remarkable achievement.

Sonny Baker

AMERICANA

BY SYLVIE SIMMONS

U.S. ELEVATOR

US Elevator

★★★★

US Elevator

RTE 8. CD/DL/LP

Johnny Irion side project takes him back to his rock band roots.

BEFORE MAKING a name in folk-Americana – which began when he teamed up romantically and musically with Sarah Lee Guthrie in the late '90s – Irion was on the South Carolina rock scene fronting a melodic psych band. Though elements of his musical past surfaced in the duo's albums, someone suggested they have a go at separating folk and rock, and Irion assembled an all-male band of friends, including Tim Bluhm of Mother Hips, who produced. There's a slew of great songs. Many wear their influences proudly. Dangerous Love starts like a Cheap Trick/Mother Hips mash then morphs into early Neil Young, whose voice Irion's sometimes resembles. Addictive rocker Community Service channels McCartney, while Cry For Help and Where The Rubber Meets The Road are gloriously Lennonesque. And there's cool instrumentals, harmonies and a big country-rock sing-along.

ALSO RELEASED

Waco Brothers

★★★★

Going Down In History

BLOODSHOT. CD/DL/LP

There are no collaborators here, making *Going Down In History* more like a follow-up to 2005's *Freedom And Weep* than 2012's *Great Chicago Fire* – sturdy, rousing, crank-it-up rock'n'roll that's sometimes more punk (Had Enough; Building Our Own Prison), sometimes more country (John Dee Graham's Orphan Song). Dedicated to Ian McLagan, the album includes a faithful cover of the Small Faces' All Or Nothing.

Rod Picott

★★★★

Fortune

WELDING ROD. CD/DL

ROD PICOTT
FORTUNE

It is the most raw and intimate long-player in the 15-year career of this fine Nashville-via-New England singer-songwriter. There are a few of the narrative songs Picott has become known for (Jeremiah), but mostly the material here is reflective and personal, moving and beautiful, like Alicia; Spare Change; and I Was Not Worth Your Love. He will be touring the UK in January and February.

Au Pair

★★★

One Armed Candy Bear

SHAM/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

An intriguing, experimental, collaboration between Jayhawk Gary Louris and Django Haskins of Old Ceremony. There are some memorable songs – Middle Distance, catchy and early Beatlesque; King Of The Valley with its lovely, end-of-summer feel – and nice dual vocals (Night Falls Early; Waiting For The First Time), but the synth-noises detract more than enhance.

The Cactus Blossoms

★★★★

You're Dreaming

RED HOUSE. CD/DL/LP

The songs on their third album, though originals, might be outtakes from The Everly Brothers' *Roots* – rockabilly (Clown Collector: "I'm conscientious, she's an objector") and dreamy pop-country (Queen Of Them All; Powder Blue could star in a David Lynch movie). There's a '60s simplicity that's instantly engaging – and the Minnesota duo's pure, tight harmonies are superb. *SS*

FILTER ALBUMS

This year's model: John Cale looks back to the future.

The new statesman

Visceral reworking of the avant-garde doyen's compelling 1982 benchmark, *Music For A New Society*. By David Sheppard.

John Cale

★★★★

M:FANS

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

JOHN CALE
M:FANS

IN CONTRAST to the anguished, cocaine-fuelled volatility of his late-'70s persona, and the unfettered rock shapes of 1981's *Honi Soit*, *Music For A New Society* proffered a musically reflective, rueful, if still tormented John Cale. Boasting emotional piano ballads and hymnal vocal melodies, it shunted dissonance to the margins, its lyrics rummaging poetically through the debris of damaged lives. Overall, the effect was not unlike that of Nico's *The Marble Index*, which Cale had produced 14 years previously – another album whose intimate, wintry songs walked the tightrope between sorrow and redemption.

Despite Cale's renown for musical reinvention (his scarily dystopian Heartbreak Hotel, or the arguably definitive reading of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah), this revamp might feel to hardcore Caleistas like a disturbance of the inviolable. Reassuringly, it proves to be an oblique, sometimes outré, but always artistic reinvestigation rather than an indulgent lap of honour around erstwhile glories; and while some of the original's aching descants and airy arrangements have been sacrificed in favour of oppressive atmosphere and opaque texture, at times Cale, now 73, sings with a mature baritone authority that borders on the operatic.

It begins with a poignant prelude, dropped from the original album at the last moment. In it we hear Cale conversing with his parents, in both English and Welsh, down a fuzzy phone line – at one point Mrs Cale even bursts into song. It should feel voyeuristic, but instead it's tender and subtly revealing: the sound of a febrile artist seeking reconnection after years dancing on the outer edge of his own existence.

The ensuing If You Were Still Around should quickly reassure naysayers. An exaggeratedly spectral and even more remorse-laden ballad than the original, it gets a second, choir-assisted, avant-funk reading later on, its wild malleability testament to Cale's robust song-craft, while the similarly wracked but emancipating Taking Your Life In Your Hands exchanges its former fractured, balladic dimensions for a saturnine art-rock reading that pushes Calean ominousness to new levels. Elsewhere, Close Watch, perhaps the best-known track on the original *MFANS*, and one of the few Cale songs that an X-Factor contestant could have a decent crack at, jettisons its previous anthemic beauty for glinting but claustrophobic Art Of Noise-like electro-pop, while the once intimate Thoughtless Kind comes re-engineered as a robotic, industrial-funk lurch. The melancholy Broken Bird, by contrast, hugs the coast of the original, with only a lonely, faltering synthesizer line to accompany Cale's regal piano and emotionally imposing, interrogative vocals ("Are you satisfied?"), and only Chinese Envoy's redrafting as a swaggering, Bowiesque art strut might disquiet devotees.

Welcome to the new, New Society.

Africaine 808

★★★★

Basar

GOLF CHANNEL. CD/DL/LP

Berlin production duo's tactile fusion of electronica and African music.

For the past three years Berlin-based DJ duo Dirk Leyers and Nomad have honed their shtick. What started as a relatively rudimentary coupling of lifted tribal chants to the pulse of a Roland TR-808 drum machine on 2013 single Tummy Tummy has mushroomed in a perverse, polymorphous universe with rhythm and bass its omnipotent gods. On *Basar* the 808 is still gurgling away in the background but the samples have made way for live instrumentation: sitars, berimbau, xylophone and squiggly synth basslines mingling with a roiling battery of low-end percussion. The resulting warm, gloopy gumbo nods affectionately to African pioneers William Onyeabor, Matias Aguayo, Manu Dibango and Francis Bebey without overdoing the reverence. Africaine 808 have perfected a highly effective remedy to standing still.

Andy Cowan

David Reich

Cross Record

★★★★

Wabi-Sabi

BA DA BING. CD/DL/LP

Spectral magic from Dripping Springs, TX.

In Japanese, wabi-sabi is a slippery concept, denoting beauty in rusticity, transience and imperfection. This, rather than the grappling scorpions on *Wabi-Sabi*'s cover, is key to Emily Cross's second album, though you wonder what grappling lay in the recording process; having left Chicago for an isolated Texan ranch, she's in the studio early and late, in between working 60-hour weeks, while husband Dan Duszynski and instrumentalist Theo Karon craft arrangements in her absence. Whatever the discord, it works; *Wabi-Sabi* is as becalmed and warm as it's wracked and haunted, in the manner of Cat Power, though Cross favours restless, jagged frameworks for these vivid ruminations cast in the stillness of sunrise and night time. The Depths and Steady Waves are accessible entry points but Basket raises the nape hairs highest, while in sound and vision Something Unseen Touches A Flower To My Forehead evokes everything about Cross Record's enthralling presence.

Martin Aston

Freddie Gibbs

★★★

Shadow Of A Doubt

ESGN. CD/DL

Indiana gangsta rapper's sequel to 2014's Madlib collab breakthrough.

Freddie Gibbs's mix tape-reared reputation for dead-eyed, unflinching gangsta rap got a serious upgrade in 2014 via *Piñata*, a deeply rewarding face-off with West Coast major-domo Madlib. He reprises its technical skills and sung hooks here, with quick-fire multisyllabic flows that unashamedly tip their brim to 2Pac and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony. While it would be overly reductive to call this Gibbs's big pop moment, Careless boasts the most ridiculously catchy chorus this side of Eurovision and he even out-Drakes Drake on the wobbly Auto-Tuned Basketball Wives. Although Gibbs's lyrics rarely veer beyond their survivalist comfort zone, his innate ability to switch up styles allows him to scale the gaping chasm between Forever And A Day's moody confessions and the unreconstructed boasts of Cold Ass Nigga with ease.

Andy Cowan

Pete Astor

★★★

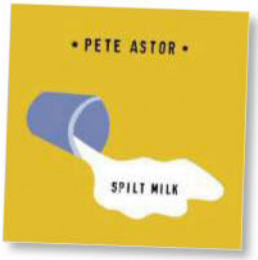
Spilt Milk

FORTUNA POP!. CD/DL/LP

'Lofty' guy's Mike Yarwood moment.

After a musical lifetime of band incarnations (The Loft; Weather Prophets) and ostensible solo aliases (The Wisdom Of Harry), Astor again steps from behind the curtain as 'himself', *à la* '70s impressionist Yarwood. Ever literate, and as irreversibly (and welcomely) Velvets-informed as ever – see My Right Hand's Some Kinda Love-style tangle of guitar twangs – these 'little' songs have the feel of home-studio genesis, thanks to pitter-pattering drum machines, the unflashy layering of instruments, and the author's intimate lyrical reflections. Befitting of the nearly-man who penned such early Creation label classics as Why Does The Rain?, however, the melodies are contrastingly 'big', as when, for instance, chiming verses cascade into Really Something's quietly harmonised whopper of a chorus. "Poor Mr Music," wonders our hero, doubtless quoting 'sensible' friends on the album's lead single, "when will he let it go?" Never, mate.

Andrew Perry



Slim Chance

★★★★

On The Move

FISHPOOL. CD/DL

Late Face Ronnie Lane's backing band reborn.

Original Slim Chance men Charlie Hart and Steve Simpson re-formed the band in 2010, 13 years after Ronnie Lane's death. Their second album since then conjures the easy, brandy-sozzled charm of 1974's *Slim Chance* LP, but with added Cajun and zydeco influences. The band still miss the old boss's voice and songwriting skills, and wisely revisit three of Lane's compositions here, including The Poacher and Done This One Before, the last with guitarist Des Horsfall's near-flawless vocal. Sometimes, the joyous weaving of fiddles, accordions and guitars is necessary to patch over the cracks in the songs. But of the new tracks, Fishing Line and Rag-time, with keyboard player Geraint Watkins' faux-delta growl, fight their corner even in such estimable company. *On The Move* sounds like music made with drinks in hand and wide smiles on faces. Surely Ronnie would approve.

Mark Blake

Aaron Watson

★★★

The Underdog

BIG. CD/DL

Indie label country star who's broken big.

Watson's long been part of the US country music scene and this is his twelfth album. But this time, things are different. *The Underdog* has established the Texan as a major star in his homeland. It's easy to see why. His voice has an ample amount of grit, he writes songs with commercial appeal and reaches out to an audience that loves traditional country sounds, with guitars, fiddles and pedal steel providing the kind of licks of which Hank Williams would have approved. A performer who believes in God and family, but somehow remains the right side of hip, he rings the changes by means of such material as The Prayer, a song inspired by a Johnny Cash book, along with the torrid word-rush that comprises Freight Train, and – best of all – Fencepost, which documents how, by sticking to his beliefs, Watson won over the non-believers of Nashville.

Fred Dellar

Miranda Lee Richards

★★★★

Echoes Of The Dreamtime

INVISIBLE HANDS MUSIC. CD/LP

After six years, a coming of age return by San Franciscan singer-songwriter.

Richards' third and follow-up to 2009's *Light Of X* couldn't be better titled. The eight songs here, recorded with her husband and producer, Rick Parker, in their LA home studio with a group of musician friends, conjure a feeling of time out of time. Opener 7th Ray captures that spine-tingling other-worldly sense perfectly: "You came in on the seventh ray of the seventh day of the year," she sings over seasoned pedal steel. Colours So Fine, another standout, is five and a half minutes of consciousness reawakening cloaked in rich Byrdsian country. The sublime First Light Of Winter, though, is the moment it all comes together, Richards' transcending her influences, perhaps for the first time, and, no longer constrained, arriving at psychedelia's higher plane.

Lois Wilson

Miranda Lee Richards arrives at psychedelia's higher plane.

Aidan Knight

★★★

Each Other

FULL TIME HOBBY. CD/LP/DL

Third album from lo-lo-fi Canadian band with namesake songwriter.

Aidan Knight's second album, *Small Reveal*, was so twinklingly subdued and tweely minimalist, it bordered on irritating. What have they done to make things so much more effective, listenable and darkly magnetic this time? Possibly it *is* that darkness. Then there's Knight's closely miked vocal – shadowy, measured, intelligent. It recalls Mark Sandman of Morphine's brooding baritone over the scatological sax and bass, and a few tracks here share that band's slow, narcotic introspection; elsewhere, there's pared-down, languid Cowboy Junkies intimacy. The title track describes hushed communion with a friend's new baby; Black Dream could be looking at death; What Light (Never Goes Dim) features a gradually building electronic bass pattern and a sudden crescendo of epiphany that is – truly – not unlike The Blue Nile's Easter Parade. A touch of feyness lingers. Not much, though.

Glyn Brown

Georgie Fame And The Last Blue Flames

★★★★

Swan Songs

THREE LINE WHIP. CD

More cool cat blues from the 72-year-old; supposedly his final album.

Swan Songs was recorded in Welwyn Garden City's The Bunker studio with Fame's seven-piece band including his sons Tristan and James Powell on guitar and drums respectively, plus trumpeter Guy Barker and saxophonist Alan Skidmore. Conceived as his last-ever album, it's a stirring valediction that stands proudly alongside the singer/keyboardsman's finest work. Fittingly, it's both personal and musical autobiography, the 12 songs remembering close friends, lost lovers and good times over rewritten hymns, big band jazz, piano blues and calypso. A plaintive revisit to 2012's Lost In A Lover's Dream captures him at his most intimate and soul searching; Diary Blues places him in a Count Basie-styled band setting; meanwhile, a cover of Floyd Dixon's Lovin' Brought Me Into This World and his own Spin Recovery, are pure Hammond house party.

Lois Wilson

BLUES

BY TONY RUSSELL

One at a Time

Eddie Cotton

★★★★

One At A Time

DECHAMP. CD/DL

A Mississippi singer-guitarist recharges Southern soul-blues.

SOARING GUITAR lines and punchy horn breaks over the steady pulse of organ and rhythm section. Blues and soul numbers racked with the pain or pleasure of personal relationships. It reads like the prospectus for an '80s album on Malaco by Z. Z. Hill or Little Milton – probably just what singer-guitarist Eddie Cotton was aiming at, to give himself and his core audience a familiar setting for his cunningly written, sexually-charged dramas of delight and deception. The 14 tracks are sequenced like an expertly managed stage show: funky opening title number; bass-end riff from Green Onions behind Be Careful; then a stunning slow blues, Better Deal, as Cotton discovers that "the back door man is gettin' a better deal than me." Sometimes wry, sometimes witty, always heartfelt.

ALSO RELEASED

Duke Robillard

★★★★

The Acoustic Blues & Roots Of…

STONY PLAIN/DIXIEFROG. CD

Acoustic American vernacular music doesn't get much better than this. Shuffling a variety of guitars and other stringed instruments, Robillard gives an endearing recital of blues, old-time songs, country and a little jazz, duetting with veteran pianist Jay McShann on the exquisite Profoundly Blue. Maria Muldaur, Jerry Portnoy and other friends drop in to help out.

The Cash Box Kings

★★★

Holding Court

BLIND PIG. CD/DL

THE CASH BOX KINGS

The Kings' third LP pushes singer Oscar Wilson out front, while guitarist Joel Paterson and harmonica-player Joe Nosek continue to play in flawlessly recast '50s/'60s blues styles on numbers like John Lee Hooker's Hobo Blues and Jimmy Rogers' Out On The Road and Nosek's own Download Blues and Gotta Move Out To The Suburbs. One of the last Blind Pig releases, a label that will be much missed.

Joe Louis Walker

★★★

Everybody Wants A Piece

PROVOGUE. CD/DL

Walker always makes ferocious and exciting music, and there are cuts here like the title track or Black & Blue that equal all but his very best. But he's released, on average, an album a year for most of the last three decades, and seasoned admirers may occasionally have a flash of *déjà entendu*.

Guy Davis

★★★

Kokomo Kidd

SMOKEYDOKE/DIXIEFROG. CD/DL

You need to persevere with this long-player. Much of the first half is sentimental or overproduced, sometimes both and one and the same time. But when Davis concentrates on the true-grit blues – Little Red Rooster, Maybe I'll Go (to the melody of Richland Woman Blues), a jugband-like Have You Ever Loved Two Women, Cool Drink Of Water – with stripped-down backing on guitar, banjo or mandolin, he hits paydirt. *TR*

FILTER ALBUMS

Santigold: soundtrack for the next party you go to.

Bloc Party

★★★

Hymns

INFECTIOUS. CD/DL/LP

Once-hyperactive indie rockers change lanes, slowly.

It's been nearly 10 years since Bloc Party announced their arrival with the clattering riffola of art-rock debut, *Silent Alarm*. Over the course of a decade, they've released a further three albums of electronica-tinged guitar scrawl, though maturity seems to have mellowed them. *Hymns* resembles a settling breath: Russell Lissack's ratcheting guitar – once the underpinning to frontman Kele Okereke's yelping vocal attack – has been replaced with shimmering pop hooks and surging synths. At times, as on the bluesy The Good News and epic album closer Living Lux they score highly, while The Love Within is a pulsating, club-primed slice of electronica. Overall, *Hymns'* roomy arrangements and spiritual lyricism eschews the urgency, angst and ricocheting guitars of their previous output. At first listen, this could be viewed as a drastic about turn, but repeated plays soon reveal Bloc Party to be handy exponents of the atmospheric slow-burner.

Matt Allen

Baaba Maal

★★★

The Traveller

MARATHON ARTISTS. CD/DL/LP

Still rocking, but gentler, as the Senegalese superstar slows down.

Now comfortably into his sixties, Maal still sounds like a young man ripping up conventions while reshaping Senegalese music. His eleventh album suggests he is aware of contemporary psychedelia, Fulani Rock's swirling cloud of rhythms introducing an aural chaos that never quite comes down to land. Maal has always made music for brains and feet, but the opening run of songs may make you think age has made him forfeit his space on the dancefloor, almost now standing outside a nightclub while music seeps through the walls. The first seven tracks are wonderfully lush and mellow, but a beautifully sunny album suddenly loses its way on the closing two-song suite, War/Peace, where Maal takes a back seat to the poet Lemn Sissay. The words are obviously significant, but the effect may have you switching off earlier than the artist anticipated.

David Hutcheon

Santigold

★★★★

99c

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

A fistful of bangers, with production chops from Dave Sitek and Doc McKinney among others.

This album pop-pops with pleasure, sunshine and subversion. Lead single Can't Get Enough Of Myself skips along with a sing-along hook, claps, echoes, sweet humour and a delightful abundance of self-love. Banshee is a footstomping, headspinning, finger-clicking dance joy with a mix that submerges into gloop only to emerge glorious in the chorus (it's a bit like waiting for the drop, but better). All I Got is lolloping, crooning electronic love for the world, Animal Collective-style, with added schoolyard chanting. Rendezvous Girl is more glassy-'80s electronics, but the shades of Pat Benatar, Prince, Kate Bush and A-ha turn into another song you'd like to hear at the next party you go to. There are gloomier tracks too – Before The Fire has a brilliantly vague portentousness, but Santi White's latest still makes you want to dance.

Anna Wood

Hinds

★★★

Leave Me Alone

LUCKY NUMBER. CD/DL/LP

Feisty Madrid quartet's debut of '60s-influenced girl gang pop.

While calling your debut album *Leave Me Alone* and rocking a motto like 'our shit, our rules' certainly signposts a punk attitude, it's refreshing to find Hinds favouring girl group sass over three-chord thrash. Originally called Deers, until the threat of legal action from the similarly monikered Canadian outfit forced a more gender specific name-change, this quartet take their cues from the pre-'70s sounds of Phil Spector, Shadow Morton and The Velvet Underground, as well as the later ramshackle simplicity of Beat Happening and The Pastels. Mixing reverb-simmered rock'n'roll with ear-candy pop and garage grit, the pointed put-downs and brazen flirtations of standout tracks like Garden, And I Will Send Your Flowers Back and Bamboo ensure a debut packed with infectious fun.

Andrew Carden

Found

★★★

Cloning

CHEMIKAL UNDERGROUND. CD/DL/LP

The machines take over for Edinburgh duo's science fiction epic.

"There's a future I can't get to," sings Ziggy Campbell on Wheel Out Apocalypse, one of the pulsing highlights of Found's fourth long-player and second for Glasgow's distinguished Chemikal Underground. The future's bright for Ziggy and multi-instrumentalist Kev Sim now they have abandoned the guitars for a widescreen sound composed of minimal parts. There are the same tasteful melodies that previously gave them more than a passing resemblance to labelmates The Phantom Band, but they are put to better use alongside the atmospheric Vangelis synths and doom-laden bass that recall some of the more daring post-punk of 1979. However irrational, Campbell's chronophobia (fear of time passing, it's a thing) is the artificial heart that drives *Cloning*. Amid the accomplished but somewhat static arrangements, it's the album's dystopian nightmare of keyboards, pitch shifting and motorik drive that shine on Found's best work yet.

Ian Crichton

Grimes

★★★★

Art Angels

4AD. CD/DL/LP

Sci-fi-pop chanteuse aims for global domination.

When Grimes – aka singer-songwriter Claire Boucher – released breakout album *Visions* in 2012, stress impinged on her creative modus operandi: some of its brooding, dark-hearted electronica had been written after nine days without sleep in a darkened room. Happily, *Art Angels* emerges from healthier times, and it shows. Crackling with radio-primed hooks, whip-snap breakbeats and Boucher's helium-pitched vocals, Grimes' third album makes a convincing strike for playlist ubiquity, with a healthy dollop of the oddball chucked in. Highlight cuts California, Realiti and Kill V. Maim blitz sugar rush harmonies with pulsing basslines, while the title track takes its cues from Madonna's late-'80s portfolio. The off-kilter, when it arrives, brims with experimental ambition, most notably on Scream, which features Mandarin lyrics from Taiwanese rapper Aristophanes. Backed by Boucher's cathartic screams, it merely adds more intrigue to one of 2015's standout pop albums.

Matt Allen

Money

★★★★

Suicide Songs

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

A move from Manchester to south London brings redemption after the fall.

Money's second album *Suicide Songs* balances desperation (I'm Not Here's "I'd rather be a tramp on the street") against salvation (I'll Be The Night is about carrying on if the sun dies). Vocalist/lyricist Jamie Lee, Billy Byron and Charlie Cocksedge's grand statements on the fine line between the gutter and redemption echo Ian Brown's proclamation I Am The Resurrection on their opening track title I Am The Lord, but what comes through musically is the stateliness of The Verve. The string-suffused I'm Not Here holds its own with anything from that band's *Urban Hymns*. Less direct than its 2012 predecessor *The Shadow Of Heaven*, *Suicide Songs* – recorded in London, rather than the Manchester where they formed – collects richly arranged reflections which climax with A Cocaine Christmas And An Alcoholic's New Year where the "bleary eyed" Lee wakes to an "unlikely dawn". Stability, it seems, has now been found.

Kieron Tyler

Baaba Maal, still ripping up conventions.

C de Castro.

The James Taylor Quartet And The Rochester Cathedral Choir

★★★

The Rochester Mass

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

Beautifully played and surprisingly moving.

Recorded in a day with the James Taylor Quartet and the 40-strong Rochester Cathedral Choir, *The Rochester Mass* is an uncommon fusion of funk and religious ceremony. If someone asked who'd attempt such a thing, acid jazz perennials JTQ may not have been your first thought. The album was inspired by the solace Taylor found listening to choral music at Rochester Cathedral during his father's battle with Alzheimer's. Influenced by previous experiments such as Deep Purple's Concerto For Group And Orchestra and at times reminiscent of Pink Floyd's Atom Heart Mother suite, it does takes a little getting used to. However, your patience is generously rewarded. It is a tremendously ambitious work, thoughtfully conceived and lovingly delivered; the groove of Agnus Dei Part 2 hits the spot; beautiful horn arrangements punctuated by the choir; the band, led by Taylor on Rhodes, play as if their lives depend on it.

Daryl Easlea

Rodinia

★★★

Drumside/Dreamside

NOW AGAIN. CD/DL/LP

Spacy ambient Krautrock shunted into a post-hip hop universe by retro soul pioneer JJ Whitefield.

JJ Whitefield is a king of reinvention. The Munich multi-instrumentalist first emerged as the creative force in Poets Of Rhythm, whose immersion in '70s funk preceded a tidal wave of retro-soulsters. His band swapped pastiche for more imaginative fusions on 2001's *Discern/Define*, trip-wiring a magic kosmische box of Cluster and early Tangerine Dream explored in more intimate detail here. Based around the fruits of a two-day chemically assisted studio jam with saxophonist/keyboardist Johannes Schleiermacher, the swirling analogue synths of the three-part Drumside quake with spacey tangents, overdubbed flutes, dubby diversions and wobbly Clangers sounds. By contrast the beat-less Drumside's swirling atmospherics, watery oscillations and abstruse field recordings evoke a disquieting claustrophobia akin to being trapped in a pothole with a hefty Korg MS-20 barring re-entry to terra firma.

Andy Cowan

AOIFE O'DONOVAN IN THE MAGIC HOUR

Aoife O'Donovan

★★★★

In The Magic Hour

YEP ROC. CD/DL/LP

Multilayered folk whispers and other wonders.

The second solo album from the former leader of Boston's progressive string combo Crooked Still is never less than intriguing. O'Donovan's voice is fragile yet sinuous, her lyrics sound enchanting yet often become lost amid the ever-changing backdrops. Her songs are frequently sun-kissed and feather-light, but sometimes develop a dark beauty, never more so than in the case of Donal Óg, a song dedicated to O'Donovan's grandfather, who died while the album was still in the writing stage, affecting O'Donovan's creative process. Produced by Grammy-nominated Tucker Martine (The Decemberists; Neko Case) and featuring such collaborators as Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins, Chris Thile, Sarah Jarosz and string quartet Brooklyn Rider, *In The Magic Hour* is, in turn, both exhilarating and exploratory.

Fred Dellar

Hieroglyphic Being

★★★

The Acid Documents

SOUNDS OF THE UNIVERSE/SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Techno + Sun Ra = far out.

Culled from a 100-copies only CDR made in 2013 by Chicago Afro-futurist Jamal Moss, with its track titles mainly culled from historical movements or orders, *The Acid Documents* feels like unearthing some ancient sought-after electro scroll. Fusing the pure early techno of acts like Phuture with the mysticism and Afrocentricity of Sun Ra and his Arkestra, Moss locates the beauty in even the most jarringly repetitive beats. Taking its name from the Assyro-Babylonian-Greek system assigning numeric values to words, Gematria sounds almost exactly how you would imagine that might; the skeletal E Clampus Vitus and minimalist throb of Hollow Earth become truly compelling. Moss has stated that he is the last in the line of producers directly influenced by pioneering Chicago DJ Ron Hardy, and you can hear echoes of his experimentation in this album.

Daryl Easlea

Eivind Aarset

★★★★

I.E.

JAZZLAND. CD/DL/LP

Norwegian guitarist creates intricate instrumental head-bangers and glacial chill-out music on seventh album.

No one sounds like Eivind Aarset, a guitarist burdened with such unhelpful tags as nu-jazz and avant-fusion. Let's just say he can make a guitar sound like a machine-gun or a buzz saw, or in prettier moments like a psychedelic Duane Eddy. These tones he applies to densely layered pieces that range from cerebral freak-outs to moody soundscapes. Often they are in suite form, so Wanderlust begins with an optimistic, cinematic feel before a blast of brutal metallic funk, which in turn gives way to a wistful coda of brass, glockenspiel and strumming. If anyone still listens to albums in one go, then *I.E.* is about 10 minutes too long before the ghostly beauty of Return Her Home brings down the curtain. But it's been quite a show – and it's his best album yet.

John Bungey

Aoife O'Donovan: fragile, sinuous vocals.

Joanna Chattman

JAZZ

BY CHRIS INGHAM

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London, Meader, Pramuk & Ross

★★★★

Royal Bopsters Project

MOTEMA. CD/DL

Virtuoso vocalese lives with this star-studded gala.

THE ARCANE art of vocalese (singing and lyricising of previously recorded jazz improvisations) is the intricate, niche-within-a-niche aspect of the jazz voice art. If scat singing divides a jazz-curious room, the syllabic and melodic convolutions of vocalese divide it further. Yet performed well, as here, it is a dazzling high-wire craft requiring a skilful, dedicated and hip practitioner. New York singer Amy London, with the super-slick Darmon Meader, Dylan Pramuk and Holli Ross, leads this sumptuous celebration with surviving legends Jon Hendricks (94), Sheila Jordan (86), Annie Ross (85) and the recently deceased Mark Murphy. Hendricks is miraculous on opener Wildwood, while Murphy is gloriously unfettered in his four appearances, as daring as ever, notably on his famous take on Freddie Hubbard's Red Clay.

ALSO RELEASED

Malija

★★★★

The Day I Had Everything

EDITION. CD/DL/LP

A collective comprising three of the UK's most intensely creative musicians (Mark Lockheart, saxophones; Liam Noble, piano; Jasper Høiby, bass), Malija delivers the expected deliciously abstruse riches a-plenty, peppered with humour, melodic wit, irregular groove and a vivid descriptive quality. Highlights include Noble's progressively demented portrait of a teacher Mr Wrack and Lockheart's galumphing Almost A Tango.

Karrin Allyson

★★★★

Many A New Day

MOTEMA. CD

Compared to those with Lorenz Hart, Richard Rodgers' songs written with Oscar Hammerstein have been under-attended by jazz singers. Consequently Karrin Allyson's plum-hearted set, with selections from The King And I, South Pacific et al, sounds as fresh as mint. Under the gorgeous, straight-faced vocals, Kenny Barron (piano) and John Patitucci (bass) steer a lightly groovy harmonic course.

David Gordon Trio

★★★★

Alexander Scriabin's Ragtime Band

MISTER SAM. CD/DL

Dave Gordon is a musician of dazzling range. Here he presents a playful, ingenious, irreverent and deeply respectful reimagining of the eccentric Russian composer's *oeuvre* in which Scriabin's music is filtered through Irving Berlin, foo-de-oh-do vocals, impressionistic jazz, ambient electro, samba, and whatever else occurs to the extravagantly resourceful pianist.

Julian Argüelles

★★★★

Tetra

WHIRLWIND. CD/DL

An original Loose Tube, saxophonist Julian Argüelles has purveyed an imaginative, distinctly European jazz since the 1980s. Whether fiery or elegiac, his music is reliably rich with inventive elegance and palpable atmosphere. His current A-list band, for whom the current repertoire was composed (Kit Downes, piano; Sam Lasserson, bass; James Maddren, drums) rise to their task with consummate élan. *CI*

The Anchoress

★★★★

Confessions Of A Romance Novelist

KSCOPE. CD/DL

Catherine Anne Davies' debut imagines a character from romance fiction on each of its 12 songs. Theatrical swishes of piano, mellotron, guitars and percussion back her powerful, red velvet voice. *JB*

MG Boulter

★★★★

With Wolves The Lamb Will Lie

HARBOUR SONGS. CD/DL/LP

Lovely set by Thames Estuary folk songwriter Boulter, whose light, Paul Simon-ish voice tells wistful tales of flawed characters living costal lives, lapped by pedal steel and other instruments. *JB*

The Black Queen

★★★

Fever Day Dream

THE BLACK QUEEN. CD/DL

LA trio including Dillinger Escape Plan's Greg Puciato plug into the decaying gloss finish of '80s synth pop and sci-fi. Urban decay, future echoes and drum machines feature heavily. Like a turbo industrial Tears For Fears. *JB*

LOVE IS ALL
OR
LOVE IS NOT AT ALL

Marc Carroll

★★★★

Love Is All…

ONE LITTLE INDIAN. CD/DL/LP

…*Or Love Is Not At All*: the full title of the Irish songwriter's seventh. Featuring Crass's Penny Rimbaud reading over hypnotic backing, this assured set also features Attraction Pete Thomas and Bill Fay's trumpeter Noel Langley. *CP*

Chappo

★★★

Future Former Self

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL

With its central conceit – the elasticity of time experienced by one Rene (seriously) – Brooklynite Chappo's second aims for an ambitious synth-pop psychedelia. Not MGMT's fearless weirdness, but many whooshing melodic highs. *JB*

Coasts

★★★

Coasts

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

With hammering drums and calypso-flavoured guitar-pop, the Bristolians sit between Foals' math rock and Friendly Fires' tropical indie. Further evolution is needed to forge an identity from the shadows of their contemporaries. *PS*

Fernando

★★★

Leave The Radio On

DÉCOR. CD/DL/LP

Confirming the Portland scene as one big love-in, here's Fernando Viciconte with Peter Buck, Scott McCaughey and Willy Vlautin on a set of high-grade rootsy guitar rave-up. You'll need at least three US measures to appreciate. *JB*

Giuda

★★★

Speaks Evil

BURNING HEART. CD/DL

Third album of stack-heeled Slade/Cock Sparrer/Sweet '70s rocking from Rome. If Watneys Red Barrel-flavoured stompers like Roll The Balls, Watch Your Step and Bonehead Waltz are something you'd dig, this is definitely for you. *IH*

Jones

★★★★

Happy Blue

MEME. CD/LP

This warm and often moving songwriting from Miracle Mile's Trevor Jones is basically a repository to be dipped into by other artists seeking quality material to cover. The title track and St Cecilia are among the choice picks. *FD*

Conrad Keely

★★★★

Original Machines

SUPERBALL. CD/DL/LP

Indulging in a host of styles not used by his main band, … Trail Of Dead, Keely's solo work sees folk, rock, blues, ballads and more standing side-by-side in a swirling mix. It's pleasingly dizzying, yet curiously coherent. *PS*

Co-Pilgrim

★★★★

Slows To Go

BATTLE MUSIC. CD/DL

Oxford-based songwriter Mike Gale distils sunshine pop classicism into bittersweet songs that channel the warmth of the West Coast '70s via deep pile harmonies and layered instruments. A Home Counties Teenage Fanclub. *JB*

Bruce Soord

★★★

Bruce Soord

KSCOPE. CD/DL

Pineapple Thief founder gives voice to his sensitive singer-songwriter side. Not a million miles from PT's quieter side, but the mood is reflective, mostly downbeat (The Odds is warm, soulful) with no explosions, pomp or rock bombast. *CP*

Various

★★★★

Counter Culture 15

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL

Rough Trade shops' impeccable annual 2-CD round up of nourishing indie. Picks include Nil's Frahm's spectral piano on Some, Floating Points' retro techno Nespole, Björk's History Of Touches, Jamie xx's dancefloor rumbler Gosh. *JB*

Bari Watts

★★★★

There Was A Time

DARK SKIES. CD/DL

Bevis Frond guitarist's happily bonkers and stylistically spot on tribute to Marc Bolan's late-'60s, early-'70s sound. Its 'sorcery' lyrics are accurate and Bolanesque indeed: "Sing 'til the rivers run/Fly with the silver swan" etc. *JB*

NOWSTREAMING

Mac McCaughan

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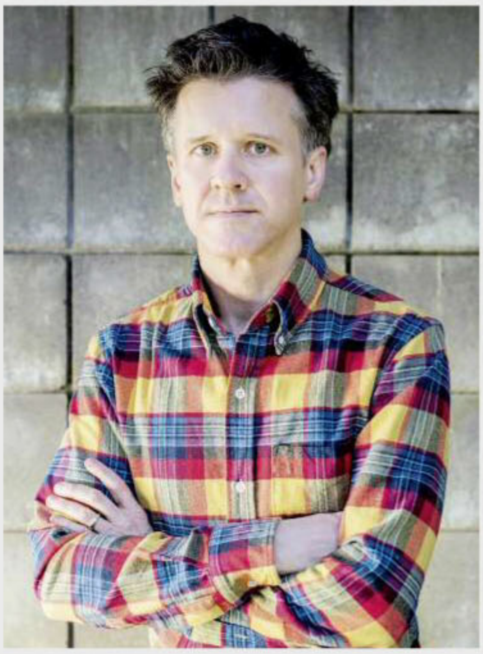
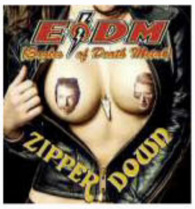


Lissa Gotwals

Indie majordomo McCaughan, on a break from Superchunk, Portastatic and his Merge label, remixes his solo album of last summer, *Non Believers*. Taking his cues from the chilly vintage synths and flanged guitars which gave that album an early-'80s New Order/Cure vibe, Mac creates a 39-minute instrumental deconstruction of *Non Believers* that drifts and reverberates. "I was… trying to imagine what it would sound like if Arthur Russell or Cluster made an album by remixing the basic tracks," he told Bandcamp, where it's streaming for free; 500 numbered yellow vinyl LPs available from January 29. *JB*



The Dean Ween Group

I Love You All The Time

First up in Eagles Of Death Metal's call for covers of *Zipper Down* tracks to aid of Paris attack victims: Dean Ween's perversely bold brilliance. (YouTube)

Jaakko Eino Kalevi

Everything Nice Featuring Farao

Burbling synth-fuelled cover of Popcaan's digital 2014 dancehall item. More chilly disco, less warmly stoned than original. Both great.

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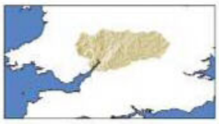

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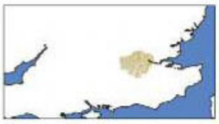

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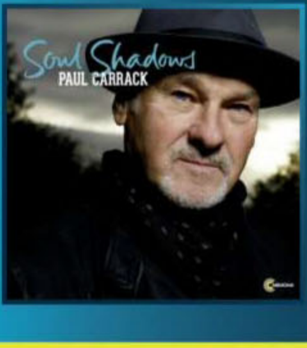
MOJO STORE OF THE MONTH

NEW FROM PROPER MUSIC

PAUL CARRACK
SOUL SHADOWS



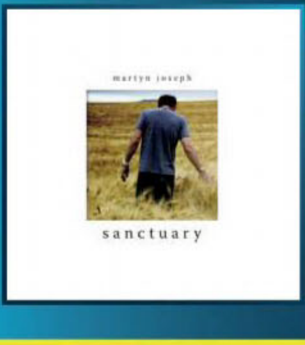
Paul Carrack, the hugely respected singer-songwriter, who is the voice of many of the landmark British pop songs of the past 40 years, unveils a stunning new album, *Soul Shadows*. The record sees him at the absolute peak of his powers as a vocalist, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. The hardest working man in show business will accompany it with his latest, extensive UK tour, which starts on January 7th.
CARRACK UK

SHOW OF HANDS
THE LONG WAY HOME

The Long Way Home
SHOW of HANDS

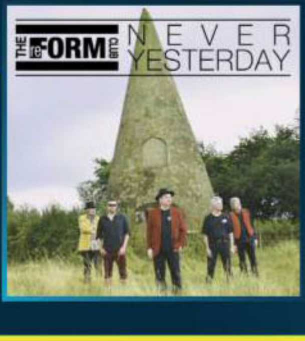
Show Of Hands have unequivocally become one of the leading forces in British folk. Steve Knightley and Phil Beer are respectively recognised as one of the UK's best singer songwriters and one of its finest multi instrumentalists. Now the Devon duo's new album sees them returning to their musical roots, firing the ignition on a 12-track album that has "England" running through it like letters through a stick of rock.
HANDS ON MUSIC

MARTYN JOSEPH
SANCTUARY



Produced by Grammy Award winner Ben Wisch, *Sanctuary* confirms Martyn Joseph's reputation as the Welsh Springsteen. He's an amazing live performer, renowned craftsman and guitarist whose songs profoundly articulate the human condition, emphasised by a stout social conscience. On tour now!
PIPE RECORDS

THE REFORM CLUB
NEVER YESTERDAY



The Reform Club (fronted by former MP Norman Baker) released their debut album *Always Tomorrow* in 2013 to great critical acclaim. Now, they follow up with their new album of 12 original tracks. The band's musical influences are varied but this new album has a strong leaning to the very English, slightly quirky pop and rock from the 60s.
ANGEL AIR

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Sons of pioneers

They unwittingly invented Americana, but seldom receive credit for it. This 4-CD box set puts the record straight. **Andy Fyfe** gets his duster coat.

The Long Ryders

★★★★

Final Wild Songs

CHERRY RED. CD

For many young Californians in the early '80s it wasn't so much *like* punk never happened, *actually* punk never happened. To many of the Paisley Underground – The Dream Syndicate, Bangles, Green On Red, Rain Parade – punk was a stone in their sneakers swiftly removed and thrown away. They'd gone to the Masque, a punk hovel under a Hollywood porn theatre, cut their hair a little shorter and bought the *Nuggets* LP, but with a few exceptions punk in LA was more a fashion statement than a political one.

For one Paisley Underground associate, however, punk was just as important as The Byrds, as Hank Williams. Sid Griffin, a Kentucky transplant to LA, was a gangly, hi-energy journalism graduate who formed early-adopting punks The Unclaimed with singer Shelley Ganz and bass player Barry Shank. The Unclaimed recorded an EP but they were no X, and in 1981 Griffin and Shank drifted away (Ganz still fronts the band today).

Meanwhile, guitarist Stephen McCarthy washed up in the San Fernando Valley from Virginia, playing straight country to suburbanites enthralled by Urban Cowboy, a post-Grease John Travolta movie where he's out-acted by a mechanical bull. McCarthy had no interest in the punk scene, yet he still answered a freesheet ad that read, "Buffalo Springfield meets The Clash". When another ad – "Two ex-Unclaimed members want The Byrds, Standells and Seeds to ride again" – drew in young punk drummer Greg Sowders, The Long Ryders saddled up.

The Ryders weren't first to immerse themselves in '60s nostalgia, but plundering it through punk and new wave's prism was years ahead. While their Paisley peers wafted along the psychedelic road, The Long Ryders wanted to gallop down it. And their historical knowledge went far deeper than that cheesy Byrdsian 'Y'. The cover of debut LP *Native Sons* recreated the photo meant for Buffalo Springfield's abandoned *Stampede*, right down to the white jeans, waistcoat and even neckerchief that Young and Stills et al wore.

The Byrds' fingerprints, notably Gene Clark's and Roger McGuinn's, were all over 1983 debut EP, 10-5-60, the opening tracks of Disc 1 here. From the 12-string shimmer of Join My Gang to the dance band rock of 10-5-60 itself, the mix of country folk with a garage backbeat gave the Ryders a directness others lacked. The psychedelia associated with the Paisley Underground was really only present for And She Rides, then seldom heard again.

By the time *Native Sons* arrived on Frontier (home of Circle Jerks, Suicidal Tendencies) under a year later, The Long Ryders had found their garage country groove. For all the Chuck Berry-meets-Bob Dylan's 115th Dream boogie of opener Final Wild Son, Gene Clark was never far from their minds: he even provided backing vocals on Ivory Tower.

In a world of synth duos and post-punk, *Native Sons* sounded alien. Country was something indie fans listened to ironically, if at all, yet UK critics in particular took to The Long Ryders. During a European tour in April 1984 they were booked on the Whistle Test twice in a month and NME made them cover stars, so when next single Looking For Lewis And Clark emerged from a new deal with Island, the tastemakers patted themselves on the back. It was a short-lived romance.

Looking For Lewis And Clark opens both 1985's *State Of Our Union* album and Disc 2. Its low-slung garage rock narrowly missed the UK Top 50 singles chart, while the album topped the US College/Alternative chart for a month. The equally chart-friendly (if not as successful) Lights Of Downtown nestled between The Replacements' bar brawl and R.E.M.'s *Fables Of The Reconstruction*, while in the middle of the album, four tracks, Two Kinds Of Love, You Just Can't Ride The Boxcars Anymore, Capturing The Flag and the barnstorming twin guitars of State Of Our Union all carried a political quest for lost freedoms in their hearts.

The same critics who had held the band high months before viewed such rockisms as a punk betrayal and seldom darkened their doorstep again (Spectacular Fall from the next album was inspired by a phrase in a review). What can only be seen in hindsight is that *State Of Our Union* was a foundation stone for what became known as No Depression, alt country and, eventually, Americana.

In 1987, third and final album *Two Fisted Tales* (Disc 3 here) left the punk element firmly locked in the garage back home. The anti-Reagan Gunslinger Man and A Stitch In Time are straightforward rock, while the track they sandwich, a cover of NRBQ's I Want You Bad, harks back to their love of 12-string McGuinn. Another cover, Davie Allan And The Arrows' instrumental Blues Theme, ends both Disc 3 and the studio recordings. Taken from posthumous fan club-only covers album *Metallic B.O.*, it's a piece of squalling Pixies-like surf punk that, whether by accident or design, parks the band back in the garage where they started and switches off the motor.

A 100mph live set for Danish TV from 1984 makes up Disc 4; three years later The Long Ryders were done. UK tours were shrinking; back in LA, Guns N'Roses were taking over the clubs. McCarthy left to write musicals and bassist Tom Stevens chose family over road. When Island asked Griffin and Sowders for a new album, they declined.

Today, for all the 1983 claims that *Native Sons* would save guitar music, it's the latter two albums that create the legacy The Long Ryders are barely credited with. A primary influence on Wilco, The Black Crowes and The Jayhawks, The Long Ryders may not have birthed Americana, but unknown even to them at the time, they were both midwife and incubator.

KEY TRACKS

- **Looking For Lewis And Clark**
- **Lights Of Downtown (Captain's Mix) – previously unreleased**
- **Harriet Tubman's Going To Carry Me Home**

> **"IN A WORLD OF SYNTH DUOS AND POST PUNK, THE LONG RYDERS SOUNDED ALIEN."**

BACK STORY: MILLER TIME

● It seemed a no-brainer. In 1987 The Long Ryders were broke but liked drinking beer, a *lot*, so when they were approached by Miller to appear in a TV commercial it looked an obvious way to pay the rent. Unfortunately, the alternative rock universe didn't see it that way and, along with the other bands in the campaign – Del Fuegos, The dBs and Cruzados – they were suddenly ostracised as sell-outs. "People took it very personally," drummer Greg Sowders told Perfect Sound Forever. "We didn't feel the same way but, in retrospect, maybe…" The commercial didn't exactly kill the band's career, but losing the respect of their hardcore fans just as they were about to crossover was a mis-step that eventually created enough friction within the band for some members to question their commitment

Before the spectacular fall: The Long Ryders look into the future (from left) Stephen McCarthy, Barry Shank, Sid Griffin, Greg Sowders.

Levitation

★★★★

Meanwhile Gardens

FLASHBACK. CD/DL/LP

Terry Bickers's progressive 1993 sessions finally get the restoration they deserve.

Both thwarted genius and self-sabotaging nearly man, Terry Bickers' inner roller-coaster has played havoc with his talent. Having first left House Of Love, he then quit his own band Levitation before their second album was even released. Replacement singer Steve Ludwin fronted a remixed *Meanwhile Gardens* only released in Australia; this version is the original, albeit just the one album (preceded by a three-track 12-inch) instead of the intended double. It's still an excessive 63 minutes of volcanic spew, both waywardly meandering and masterfully tight, like Rush on E. Levitation loved to improvise, but Even When Your Eyes Are Open shows they could structure the torrent, though the eight-minute I Believe is truer to the quintet's feral nature. Paralleling the rise of Spiritualized, Verve and Mercury Rev, *Meanwhile Gardens* manages to out-play, and out-crazy, them all.

Martin Aston

Dr. John

★★★★★

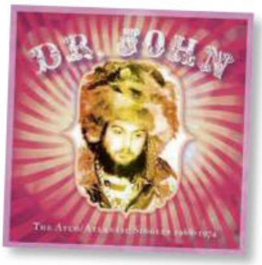
The Atco/Atlantic Singles 1968-1974

OMNIVORE. CD

Essentially, it's a best-of early Dr. John.

Dr. John – aka Mac Rebennack – told MOJO last year that Huey 'Piano' Smith advised him thusly in the art of songwriting: "Go check when the kids is playin' games in the street and steal one from them." This explains the catchy melodic simplicity of Mac's earliest material under his mythical medical moniker. Talk about earworms – songs like Mama Roux and Jump Sturdy effortlessly nest in one's lobes for life. Likewise, many of the lyrics are re-workings of New Orleans voodoo traditions – most famously I Walk On Gilded Splinters. Rebennack's cover of Willie Dixon's Wang Dang Doodle fits perfectly with his linguistic loop-de-loos. Toning down the mumbo-gumbo in the early '70s didn't hurt, that's when he yielded Right Place Wrong Time and Such A Night – two of his best-sellers in a still-slammin' career.

Michael Simmons



Cass McCombs

★★★

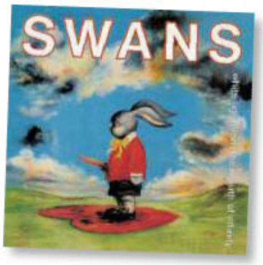
A Folk Set Apart

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Americana hobo's first anthology, subtitle: *Rarities, B-Sides & Space Junk, Etc.*

Since his 2002 debut, Cass McCombs has wandered freely – literally, as he prefers a couch-surfing (and car-dwelling) existence. There was an initial relationship at 4AD and a prolonged stay at Domino, where three albums this decade represent his creative peak – *Wit's End* and *Humor's Risk* especially. But sessions and collaborations abound, finally collected here. Minimum Wage and Empty Promises tap those three albums' gaunt, mordant, yet warm and sophisticated laments, like Big Star's *Third* ballads plus a Hank Williams hangdog spirit, evoking the sun sinking on another drifting day. These are easily outweighed by off-the-cuff rock(ing) fragments revealing a more skitterish, sleep-deprived temperament. Oddities abound: Evangeline is a jangly ray of sun; Catacombs Cow Cow Boogie a twanging instrumental; Texas a less successful meander.

Martin Aston



Swans

White Light From The Mouth Of Infinity/ Love Of Life

★★★★★

MUTE. CD/DL/LP

Michael Gira's early-'90s magnum opus, plus baroque follow-up in a box set.

As the 1980s receded, Gira evolved Swans on from the proto-industrial kerrang of Time Is Money (Bastard), into the jaw-dropping semi-acoustica of major debut *The Burning World*. The latter's disastrous sales for MCA only deepened his corporate antipathy, prompting, on '91's self-released *White Light…*, a song called Failure – as crushing a study in despondency as any Mississippi blues. However, there also lurked staggeringly beautiful (if mournfully delivered) songs like Love Will Save You and, from Gira's then-partner Jarboe, When She Breathes. With no middle ground between terrifying bleak-fests and hymns of romantic salvation (ie, no boring tracks), this exquisitely orchestrated double-LP is Gira's masterpiece. The following year's *Love Of Life* upholds the revelatory vibe, but, laced through with found voice recordings, lacks the sense of all-eclipsing sublimation.

Andrew Perry

Richard Dawson

★★★

The Magic Bridge

WEIRD WORLD/DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

2011 set mutates the blues and re-invents English folk.

Richard Dawson's 2014 song The Vile Stuff was a haunted, Homeric epic delivered like a demonic Ewan MacColl after a crate full of Newcastle Brown; droning, deranged and brilliant. This, his fourth album, showcased a guitar technique that has since drawn comparisons to both Captain Beefheart and Les Dawson, and a talent for storytelling rooted in north-eastern folklore. Here is a world of childhood memories, backwoods beasts and dramatic landscapes, Dawson's lyrics on Wooden Bag and Grandad's Deathbed Hallucinations evoking the poetry of Basil Bunting, with an approach reminiscent of John Martyn, Robert Wyatt or perhaps even Ivor Cutler in its unpredictable singularity. One minute intimate and reflective, the next berserk. Bum notes, strange syntax and a mordant sense of humour – with these tools Dawson is shaping up to be a true British original with a back catalogue worthy of investigation.

Ben Myers

Neil Young

★★★★

Bluenote Café

REPRISE. CD/DL/LP

A sonic lark from 1988, greatly expanded.

In 1988, Neil Young got the blues, which helped him create a sound unlike any in his 50-year career. He expressed it on his album that year, *This Note's For You*, a casual collection of horn-punctuated, roadhouse blues stomps, which stood in contrast to the star's more common forays into folk, country and rock. The album found a more driving corollary on a subsequent tour, heard on this 2-CD, 4-LP release. The set includes seven songs left off *This Note's…*, many now sturdier than versions previously issued. Young's 11-man Bluenotes band features six horns, which add humour and raunch. Two older songs make the set: Buffalo Springfield's On The Way Home, given a loungier arrangement, and Tonight's The Night, heard in a less morose 19-minute take. But the standouts are Young's solos, his usual distortion replaced by a bluesy sting.

Jim Farber

Weather Report

★★★★

The Legendary Live Tapes: 1978-1981

COLUMBIA LEGACY. CD/DL

Lost chapters from fusion giant's back pages.

As its ever-changing personnel attested (they had 28 different members in 15 years), Weather Report were a band in perpetual motion. But while rhythm sections came and went, the band's central core comprising ex-Miles Davis sidemen Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter remained immutable. Arguably one of their most potent incarnations came in the three years when mercurial bassist Jaco Pastorius and drummer Pete Erskine were in situ. Their time is chronicled on these 4-CDs of unreleased in-concert material, some of it sourced from audience bootleg recordings as well as soundboard mixes. Ranging from kinetic live iterations of the band's classic tunes – among them Birdland, Black Market and Teen Town – to inspired solo spots from Shorter and Pastorius, this compilation captures Weather Report's compelling on-stage alchemy in all its glory.

Charles Waring

Richard Dawson: intimate, reflective, berserk, a true British original.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, pointing gospel in the direction of blues and soul.

Broad church

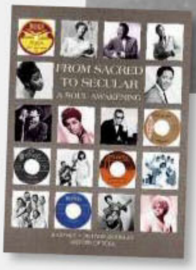
Eight discs trace early journey from sacred soul to mainstream hits. **Geoff Brown** gets on the road to enlightenment.

Various

★★★★

From Sacred To Secular: A Soul Awakening

HISTORY OF SOUL. CD



WITH 231 songs on 8-CDs, *A Soul Awakening* maps the journey from 1927 spirituals and gospel through blues, R&B and jazz to 1962 soul, a style on the cusp of massive incursions into the mainstream. Dip in anywhere across the chronologically ordered CDs, and you'll find joy, fascination and believable emotions from satiny singers or grittier vocalists as salty as the sea.

Starting with Arizona Dranes's I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go, one of 16 tracks she recorded, and followed by Sister Mary Nelson's Judgement, also from 1927, their tough, enthusiastic voices accept no argument, brook no disagreement. Beside them, Bessie Smith and Rosetta Tharpe sound positively smooth. Blind Willie Johnson is just as fiery on his 1928 blues recording of Lord I Just Can't Keep From Cryin', a clear precursor to soul shouters, but Professor J Earle Hines's How Sweet It Is (1948) and 1951's live-from-church broadcast of This Old Soul Of Mine are even more obvious models for '60s Motown hits by Marvin Gaye and The Isley Brothers.

Into the gospel tale on CD1, *Wade In The Water*, the compilers weave the parallel, distinct yet cross-pollinating stories of blues and jazz. In 1948, just as guitar is introduced to gospel on Sister Matthews' Stand By Me – not the blueprint for Ben E. King's classic (Stand By Me Father, Soul Stirrers, 1959, *Singing From My Soul*, CD5) – blues guitar is getting a twist of sophistication via T-Bone Walker, heard here on Stormy Monday Blues with its jazzy horn arrangement. Jazz is evident vocally, too, on the 1951 recordings of one of Ahmet Ertegun's first signings, Little Miss Cornshucks, not as cute as she sounds on a sassy Try A Little Tenderness. The 'literalness' of voice and lyrics is a delight as The Jackson Gospel Singers get choo-chooing on 1949's Heaven Bound Train or Billy Wright counts the cards on Stacked Deck in '50. And that's just CD1. The seven other CDs have as much, and more, to offer right up to '62 on CD8 (*Somebody Have Mercy*) as James Brown's I'll Go Crazy, Sam Cooke's Somebody Have Mercy and Otis Redding's These Arms Of Mine show soul audibly harking back to those gospel beginnings.

Housed in 30-plus pages of hard-cover book, the overview and potted biogs are not arranged chronologically, as is the music, but by genre which calls for a bit of to-ing and fro-ing. But like the awful ethereal choir on Esther Phillips's No Headstone For My Grave, that's a minor quibble over this enjoyable, enlightening collection.

Your Majesty...
WE ARE HERE

Earl Brutus

★★★★

Your Majesty... We Are Here

3 LOOP MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Synth-glam yob-cerebralists' 1996 debut. "Like Kraftwerk caught wanking by their dads," they said.

Earl Brutus had brilliant slogans – "Bonfire night, every night" – and inspired an all-female tribute band called Girl Brutus. Co-fronted by Jim Fry, brother of ABC's Martin, their music was equally compelling. Glam riffs and synths underpinned lyrical indictments of a pound-shop planet, while Brian May-style harmonic guitar periodically erupted, played by ex-JoBoxers man Rob Marche. Indeed, the LP title was a message to Freddie Mercury – Brutus would save rock. It all suggested a perfect jukebox blaring in a perfect pub, where last orders lasted forever. An additional CD includes remixes by Saint Etienne and David Arnold, while the equally potent 1998 follow-up *Tonight You Are The Special One* is also reissued. Additionally, both albums are available together in a glitter-dipped limited-edition box-set – a fitting tribute to the band's late co-singer Nick Sanderson, a rail-worker glam fan who called himself the Train Driver In Eyeliner.

Roy Wilkinson

Maki Asakawa

★★★★

Maki Asakawa

HONEST JON'S. CD/DL/LP

Stygian jazz torchery from the black-clad counter cultural Japanese singer.

Maki Asakawa

From the late '60s to her untimely death in 2010, Maki Asakawa was the heavy-fringed icon of Japanese beatnik culture. A hopeful singer from rural north Japan, who moved to Tokyo in 1962, she was schooled in the city's left-wing literati scene, in thrall to American jazz, blues and gospel. Performing in American bases and chanson clubs, Asakawa caught the attention of avant-garde poet and playwright Shuji Terayama. Working with jazz arranger Kozaburo Yamaki, the duo crafted an introspective bohemian image that cut through the pop optimism of the time. Deep, rich, soaring, and sad, Asakawa's singing style was unique for the time and remains deeply moving, especially on Boro To Furutetsu, backed by a wailing live trio, or the drifting dischord of Aisa Nai No Aise Nai No, as she taps into the bleak existential melancholy of her late '60s spiritual kinsfolk, Scott Walker and Nico.

Andrew Male

Frank Sinatra

★★★★

A Voice On Air (1935-1955)

COLUMBIA LEGACY. CD/DL

Early Ol' Blues Eyes en route to being perfectly Frank.

FRANK SINATRA
A VOICE ON AIR

During musical pursuits, Francis Albert Sinatra was the king of class and this lavish 4-CD box reflects an insistence on excellence. (The 'tween-tune corny period patter is forgivable fun.) The set's title was a prevalent description of his effortless phrasing, and 'The Voice' an earned honorific for the greatest male popular singer of his generation. These radio broadcasts, rehearsals and duets are not only mandatory for any Sinatra fan, but fascinating for students of pop music's evolution. The Jersey kid was influenced by Bing Crosby and Billie Holiday and as he matured, his relaxed naturalism and swing became increasingly more pronounced – it was as if he'd opened his heart and was speaking directly to the listener. By the time of Our Love Is Here To Stay towards the end of CD4, Sinatra had dropped any conventional vocal mannerisms and entered his mightiest period.

Michael Simmons

Raekwon

★★★★★

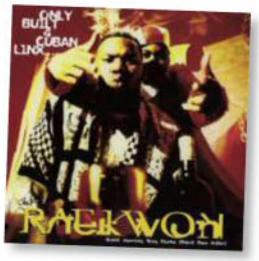
Only Built 4 Cuban Linx

GET ON DOWN. CD

Twentieth anniversary of game-changing Wu-Tang solo set, in 'premium watch box'.

Kool G Rap introduced mafia terminology to hip hop, but Raekwon made it cinematic. Staten Island's Wu-Tang Clan were still a shadowy force when their portly Chef offered up the third solo LP after Method Man and Ol' Dirty Bastard's respectively raw and jumbled offerings. Raekwon's nimble narrative about two ambitious street hoods addressed the illicit drug trade's intricacies and sparred off his chemistry with Ghostface Killah. Gritty, granite-tough vignettes Incarcerated Scarfaces, Verbal Intercourse and Criminology shone over RZA's atypically stark beats, muddied horns and detuned piano stabs. In its wake, no MC could blithely rap about crime; they had to add critical insider details. Nas and The Notorious B.I.G.'s second albums, and Jay-Z's debut *Reasonable Doubt*, followed its hard-boiled blueprint to the letter.

Andy Cowan



Getty Images

THE COMPLETE COLUMBIA AND RCA ALBUMS COLLECTION
ART BLAKEY

Art Blakey

★★★★

The Complete Columbia And RCA Albums Collection

SONY. CD/DL

The Jazz Messenger delivers seven albums plus extras.

After two live LPs for Blue Note, Columbia snapped up powerhouse drummer Art Blakey's aggregation, with tenorist Hank Mobley and pianist Horace Silver also immediate stars. All accessible melodies, attractive solos and hard-graft rhythm, 1956's *The Jazz Messengers* set the bar high and Blakey would maintain the standard by continually refreshing the Messengers with outstanding young prospects who'd inevitably make good after flourishing in the (mostly) quintet settings. Here, Donald Byrd, Bobby Timmons, Jackie McLean, Bill Hardman and Lee Morgan are among the many young stars of the period (up to 1959). The last three albums, recorded live in Paris, with sax men Benny Golson and Wayne Shorter joining Morgan, Timmons and Blakey, among others, reveal fiery chemistry. *A Night In Tunisia*, Blakey percussion extravaganza *Drum Suite*, and an album of Lerner & Loewe standards (from Paint Your Wagon, My Fair Lady etc) complete a supercharged box.

Geoff Brown

The Pretty Things

★★★

Live At The BBC

REPERTOIRE. CD/DL

Four-CD box maps the group's musical journey through radio and TV sessions, 1964 to '75.

the pretty things
Live at the BBC

The five tracks taken from Saturday Club in October 1964, the earliest session included on this 60-track set of BBC appearances, capture the group at their most raw and visceral, in thrall to live performance with covers of Big Boss Man, Mama Keep Your Big Mouth Shut and Road Runner. Live versions of Defecting Grey and SF Sorrow Is Born from Top Gear in '67 and '68 respectively present a confident, assured group making full use of studio advances to realise their acid visions. By the '70s, the group have set their sights on filling stadiums. Sessions are well executed, but the music is unimaginative hard rock; an explosive run through Route 66 from 1973, though, bucks the trend and reminds how thrilling the group could be.

Lois Wilson

Son Volt

★★★★

Trace: 20th Anniversary Edition

RHINO. CD/DL/LP

Expanded debut from Jay Farrar's post-Uncle Tupelo band.

Like any expanded edition, the main purpose behind this two-disc expanded *Trace* is to goose sales of a catalogue recording. Son Volt's 1995 debut, following Uncle Tupelo's demise, shined a brighter light on leader Jay Farrar's songwriting and, though they never quite matched it, it remains something of a '90s Americana classic. The additional material doesn't do much more than confirm what the original already indicated: that this was one hot little band, albeit not one that would change the course of music. The eight demos that flesh out disc one are merely rough sketches. It's the second disc, a live 1996 concert from New York's now-defunct Bottom Line, that showcases the best of what Farrar and company had going for them: here those first-album tunes, alongside a handful of Uncle Tupelo tracks, are fine-tuned, exploding with personality and fire.

Jeff Tamarkin

FRANÇOISE HARDY

Françoise Hardy

★★★★

Mon Amie La Rose

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD/LP

The connoisseur's choice from her first five LPs, now all newly remastered.

Though she is often filed next to France's yé-yé girls, it was obvious from her first album, released in 1962, that Hardy was sui generis, a Gallic blend of Juliette Gréco chanson and Tin Pan Alley rock'n'roll. By 1964, when *Mon Amie…* was released, she could hang out with Stones, Beatles and Dylan and inspire Marianne Faithfull's first steps. There were two reasons for this: for once, she had a surfeit of new material to pick from (preventing her label repackaging tracks from old EPs); and studio time was now spent in London, where Jimmy Page and Big Jim Sullivan could beef up cuts such as Je N'Attends Plus Personne. Hardy would mature brilliantly in the 1970s, but here are the first solid hints that she was built for the long run. Moody, innocent and still as fresh as the day it was recorded.

David Hutcheon

T U X E D O M O O N

Tuxedomoon

★★★★

The Box

CRAMMED DISCS. LP

Vinyl set of nine studio albums and one vault-raiding addition from San Francisco's post-punk neo-classicists

Founding member Steven Brown cited Tuxedomoon's early influences as Eno, Bowie, John Cage, Bernard Herrmann, Nino Rota, Igor Stravinsky and Ennio Morricone; in other words, haughty, brainy pop (try What Use? from 1980 debut *Half-Mute*, or spectral ballad In A Matter Of Speaking from 1985's *Holy Wars*) and lingering, impressionistic detail (1981's *Desire* opened with a 15-minute suite), like a tussle between sides one and two of Bowie's *Low*. After relocating from the US to Brussels 1986's *Ship Of Fools* was a denser collage, and like *Low*, their opposing strains on separate sides. Their late-'80s split was followed by the belated appearance of *The Ghost Sonata*, an "opera without words". 2004 reunion *Cabin In The Sky* and 2007's *Vapour Trails* have capably picked up the baton while stressing the haunted-elegant soundtrack side of their formidable psyches.

Martin Aston

King Crimson

★★★

Thrak Box

DGM. CD+DVD+BR

Sixteen-disc set of mid-'90s line-up of the episodic prog titans in minute, loving detail.

Thrak, that's the sound of a hefty box of CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays landing on the coffee table. These live cuts, remixes and improvs expand on 1995's *Thrak* created by the short-lived "double trio" line-up, with new remixes revealing much more vividly what the two drummers, two guitarists and two bassmen were up to. Rampant virtuosity abounds as Robert Fripp and team veer between a wistful ballad or two, a little pop-funk and some of the darkest blasts in the rock canon. One CD – *Attakcathrak* – stitches together live improvs into a symphony of stupendous bleakness, while another mixes studio chat and outtakes to build a picture of Crims in the studio. Vast, exhaustive, definitive – if you need six more versions of VROOM, you've got 'em.

John Bungey

REEL-TO-REAL
LOVE

Love

★★★

Reel To Real

HIGH MOON. CD/DL/LP

Arthur Lee's band's seventh album, released in 1974 by RSO, with 12 bonus tracks.

Love's final studio album, after Arthur Lee's 1972 solo debut *Vindicator*, sees Lee fitting in with the musical and cultural times rather than defining them. As a result, it's him at his most orthodox. Backed by his *Black Beauty* band – drummer Joe Blocker, guitarist Melvan Whittington, bassist Robert Rozelle – plus guitarists John Sterling, Harvey Mandel and Buzzy Feiten, Lee immerses himself in '70s soul on Time Is Like A River and Good Old Fashion Dream. The former aligns him to Sly Stone, the latter to the Muscle Shoals sound. A straight cover of William DeVaughn's Be Thankful For What You Got exposes another influence. Smoother revisits to his own Singing Cowboy and Everybody's Gotta Live, though, provide the strongest tracks. Extras, meanwhile, range from Stax-like soul (Do It Yourself) to Jailhouse Rock rewrites (Graveyard Hop).

Lois Wilson

Credit in here

Fitting in: Arthur Lee (far right) with Love, orthodox and immersed in soul.

Herbert W.Worthington

Steve Warner

★★★★

Steve Warner

EARTH. CD/DL/LP

Melbourne man's late '70s acid-folk private-press rarity unearthed.

Howard Eynon, another Australian psych specialist rescued from oblivion by Earth, detects something "Tolkienesque" about Warner, which might explain why this immaculately crafted dream-folk quest would have struggled on release in 1979 even if he had pressed more than 500 copies. Warner's 50-minute one-man opus actually sounds forever 1969, when Syd Barrett and Tyrannosaurus Rex spun precious ruminations. No similarly madcap lyrical visions abound; Warner's song titles are often prosaic (Summer; We'll Go On; Untitled) and only occasionally effusive (Lightning Over The Meadow) and brooding (Cement River, albeit one of Warner's loveliest tunes). The main thrust is musical, with Warner lacing stock guitar and piano with flute and primitive synths, but no drums, which creates a floating feeling, of sun-dappled daydreams only interrupted by whimsical instrumentals (Charlton and the self-explanatory A Boogie) that reinforce the image of a maverick lost in studio serenity. And yet it was to be his only album.

Martin Aston

Fleetwood Mac

★★★★

Tusk Deluxe

WARNER BROS. CD+LP+DVD/CD

'Buckingham's folly' given elaborate 5-CD reissue.

Though it shifted four million units, Mac's ambitious eleventh was considered a disappointment upon release, but *Tusk*'s since-recognised maverick invention is extensively celebrated here. Two discs of unheard concert recordings from the era don't add much to their bruised, remarkable 1980 *Live* album, but unhinged live takes of Tusk and The Chain are undeniable highlights. More valuable are two discs of alternate versions finding Lindsey Buckingham's notoriously elaborate final productions still evolving: an early Storms, pared back to just Lindsey's acoustic and Stevie Nicks's vocals, is affectingly fragile, while troubled former guitarist Peter Green lends an exquisite haunt to an unheard Brown Eyes. Six outtakes of I Know I'm Not Wrong illuminate Buckingham's studio process, and his ambition to splice a punk sensibility to Mac's soft-rock mastery. That ambition might've wrong-footed their audience back in the day, but *Tusk*'s multi-faceted sprawl intrigues anew in this most appropriately excessive edition.

Stevie Chick

***Tusk* sharpened: Fleetwood Mac 'folly' intrigues.**

Norman Seeff

Bruce And Vlady

★★★

The Reality

VAMPI SOUL. CD/DL/LP

Lost 1970 album by US organist and Polish drummer issued on Svensk American.

BRUCE
VLADY
THE REALITY

Bruce is Bruce Powell, today a music teacher in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who at the turn of the 1970s approached his organ very much as Jimi Hendrix did guitar; his playing punctuated with wild, psychedelic soloing. Vlady, aka Władysław Jagiełło, meanwhile, was a Polish jazz drummer and founder of his native country's avant-garde scene. They recorded just the one album together, following a chance meeting in Stockholm. The result, positioned equidistant from prog rock, jazz fusion and new-thing, is both spiritual and political; its 10 songs calling for freedom and revolution over percussive chaos and thundering Hammond B-3 chords. Had it ever reached international ears it would have sat in the racks alongside records by Hansson & Karlsson and Brian Auger's Oblivion Express. When the label that issued it folded just after release, though, it sadly never stood a chance.

Lois Wilson

Various

★★★★

Coxsone's Music: The First Recordings Of Sir Coxsone The Downbeat 1960-62

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Hot R&B, cool jazz, and driving proto-ska, from before Studio One was founded.

Coxsone's Music

Clement 'Sir Coxsone' Dodd arguably did more than any other producer for the development of Jamaican popular music. His Studio One recording facility gave birth to the Wailers and countless other groups in the ska years and he subsequently instigated major developments in reggae and dub. This 3-CD compilation gathers 46 tracks produced by Dodd before the establishment of Studio One and the range of styles is staggering: there is gospel boogie by The Mellow Larks and Clancy Eccles, shuffle blues from The Shiners and Clue J & His Blues Blasters, and a lot of very fine jazz from Cecil Lloyd and the musicians that cut the *Jazz Jamaica* LP. Every track is a winner, with Don Drummond's Reload and Dew Drops among the more outstanding, and the audio quality is surprisingly high throughout. Thus, much to discover and savour.

David Katz

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

THE EARLY MOTOWN EPs
LITTLE STEVIE WONDER
R&B CHART MAKERS

Various

The Early Motown EPs Box

UNIVERSAL

These seven British-issue EPs – The Miracles' Shop Around, Little Stevie Wonder's I Call It Pretty Music But… The Old People Call It The Blues, the Hitsville USA No. 1 compilation and R&B Chart Makers No. 1 to 4 – are among the most coveted Motown collectables in their original form. Originally released on the London American, Stateside and Tamla Motown labels between 1961 and 1965, today they can command three figure sums each. It's not simply about the 28 tracks spread across the seven 45s, although they are, of course, all great and include relative obscurities by The Supremes (Run Run Run), Darnells (Too Hurt To Cry, Too Much In Love To Say Goodbye) and Carolyn Crawford (Devil In His Heart). The appeal is also in the excellent, evocative packaging, each one a genuine work of art, wrapped in beautifully designed flip-back cardboard sleeve with photograph and sleevenote too.

Lois Wilson

PATRICK COWLEY
MUSCLE UP

Patrick Cowley

★★★★

Muscle Up

DARK ENTRIES/HONEY SOUNDSYSTEM. CD/DL

Synth ecstasy and exotica on gay porn soundtracks recorded 1973-1980.

This really is a revelation. Patrick Cowley is best known for kick-starting high energy, with Sylvester's (You Make Me Feel) Mighty Real, his epic 15 minute remix of I Feel Love, and his futuristic sci-fi concept album, *Mind Warp*. But these 10 electronic pieces are entirely different. Recorded for two gay porn movies released by John Coletti's Fox Studio, Muscle Up and School Daze, they inhabit a range of different styles and moods that transcend raw functionality and push forward into sensuous ambience. Opener Cat's Eye merges wave sounds with Tomita-like synthesizer melodies, Wendy Carlos synth textures and Martin Denny travelogues. The exotica feel continues with The Jungle Dream, 13 minutes of sultry atmospherics. Somebody To Love Tonight – an early version of Sylvester's I Need Somebody To Love Tonight – is on more familiar funk territory. Uhuru is spookier, not unlike Giorgio Moroder's later The Apartment, but again, those synths explode in ecstasy. Highly recommended for all electronic fans.

Jon Savage

The Edge Of Daybreak

★★★★

Eyes Of Love

NUMERO. CD/DL/LP

1,000 copies only soul obscurity recorded by inmates in prison and issued on a local imprint.

Nine inmates serving sentences of six to 60 years for armed robbery and assault in Powhatan Correctional Centre outside Richmond, Virginia hole up in the jail's recreation room to record eight original songs in five hours on a local mobile unit. One, McEvoy Robinson, is known in soul circles, having played bass for Otis Redding and co-written Redding's Just One More Day. As they record the last track, guards ready to escort them back to their cells. The songs, from transcendental ballads (the delicious harmony soul of Let Us) to get-on-the-good-foot rare grooves (the propulsive flute fluttering I Wanna Dance With You), capture a briefly constructed utopia; everyone equal and lost in a moment of wondrous musical liberation. It really was an extraordinary happening.

Lois Wilson

WORLD CUP CHAMPIONSHIP
1966
Newsreel
POP!
BAREFOOTIN'
otis redding
love man
PSYCHOTIC REACTION

FILEUNDER

Roots '66

The crazy mixed-up sound of 50 years ago. By Jim Irvin.

Your route through pop depends on when you were born. Conversing with some teens recently, I realised that to them, the dawn of time is *OK Computer*. They said so. Gentle enquiries about stuff from an earlier vintage got some pointedly blank looks. Jeff Buckley, The Strokes, Daft Punk and Coldplay are their musical forefathers.

I'd love to know what they'd make of the forgotten thoroughfares and winding B-roads explored on the 2-disc soundtrack to Jon Savage's book *1966: The Year The Decade Exploded* (Ace) ★★★★★, a pocket-sized time-tunnel to half-a-century ago. Though highly personal – largely drawn from Savage's memories, on the cusp of teenhood, of pirate radio broadcasts beamed into one ear from a red plastic transistor radio – it gathers frayed threads from the histories of pop, funk, Mod, psych, soul and folk, played by assorted pipers at the dawn of pop culture. Things that are forever branded upon my soul like The Lovin' Spoonful's Summer In the City, The Supremes' You Keep Me Hanging On or Tim Hardin's Hang On To A Dream must sound impossibly dated/alien/inept to kids for whom, say, The Smiths are potentially as irrelevant and peculiar as Rudy Vallée was to my generation. But I'd hope they couldn't fail to hear Love's riotous 7&7 Is or Count Five's eccentrically structured Psychotic Reaction or, for that matter, Reach Out by The Four Tops, without recognising the particularly tangy youth-dew distilled into those recordings.

Presented chronologically, these 48 songs – a skilfully selected mix of the well loved and the obscure – reveal the year becoming increasingly unhinged, in a good way. The obscure stuff (to these ears) comes from The Wheel-A-Ways, Roosters, Human Expression, Oxford Circle and Blue Things, but my biggest surprise was an extraordinary James Brown 45, Tell Me That You Love Me. I'd never heard this truly odd side. Built from snippets of a live recording, it takes 30 seconds to fade up and is over one minute and three blood-curdling screams later. Then there's People! Let's Freak Out by The Freaks Of Nature, Kim Fowley's crazed Van Morrison impersonation using the remnants of Them, and, best of all, the wonderful In The Past by We The People, whose opening Greco-psych tumble played on something called an octachord is ridiculously exciting.

With hits from The Who, Norma Tanega, Lee Dorsey and Otis Redding, notable flops like San Remo Strings' Festival Time and Rex Garvin's original Sock It To 'Em JB, plus Sandie Shaw, Batman, Bowie and The Electric Prunes and a glimpse into gay history via Joe Meek and a Tornados B-side, here's a feverish year compressed (Savage's favourite word in the liner notes) into one irresistible party's worth of vintage pop. Proof that, no matter how well travelled you are, there are still roads yet to be discovered everywhere.

Hang on to a dream: artefacts of a winning year include The Seeds; World Cup Willie badge; Robert Parker, Otis Redding and Count Five; (below) *1966* CD; pop singer Dodie West's '60s battle is still being fought.

1966
EQUAL WORK EQUAL PAY!

"NO MATTER HOW WELL TRAVELLED YOU ARE, THERE ARE STILL ROADS YET TO BE FOUND."

John Barry

★★★★

Soundtracks And Singles 1963-1966

FANTASTIC VOYAGE. CD

A soundtrack parallel to Bob Dylan's '63-66 flush, John Barry composed a series of culture-shifting scores including Zulu, Four In The Morning and a selection of singles covering Bond vignettes and more. *PS*

GRAHAM BOND
live at the BBC And Other Stories

Graham Bond

★★★★

Live At The BBC…

REPERTOIRE. CD/DL

Subtitle *…And Other Stories* points to organ/sax/singer Bond's wide reach: Quartet; Organization; Initiation; guest. Beeb sound is variable across 4-CDs, 1962-72; a '66 Wade In The Water is top, Bond called "a Balzac in dark glasses". *GB*

Laddio Bolocko

★★★★

Live & Unreleased

NO QUARTER. CD+DVD/DL

Tracing fiery non-LP trajectory of late-'90s Brooklyn-based Illinois three-piece/quartet. Hypnotic power-drumming of Blake Fleming leads bass, sax, guitar and organ through far-out rituals of mega-heavy jazz-drone exultation. Incredible. *AM*

Lamb

★★★

5

BUTLER. CD/DL/LP

Andy Barlow and Lou Rhodes' hiatus-ending set expanded four years after its release. The original mix of glacial synths and beats plus Rhodes' earthy vocals augmented with five extra tracks and demos that add a warm intimacy. *PS*

Roy Orbison
One of the Lonely Ones

Roy Orbison

★★★

One Of The Lonely Ones

UMC. CD/DL/LP

Previously unreleased album, recorded for MGM in 1969 on which diverse fare is delivered in warm, dramatic manner by the man surely born to melodically decorate David Lynch movies. *FD*

Primal Scream

★★★★

Screamadelica

SONY. CD

Repackaging of 2011's 20th anniversary set comes with Dixie Narco EP, remixes and a previously unavailable live set from '92 to bolster the band's indie-rave landmark that led a generation out of the pub and onto the dancefloor. *JB*

Sir Thijs Van Leer
Live at Trading Boundaries

Sir Thijs Van Leer

★★

Live At Trading Boundaries

TRADING BOUNDARIES. CD

Focus's flautist live in Sussex in 2013. CD1 is Focus acoustic; two other discs feature piano and flute covers and lengthy spoken asides about his life in music. No Hocus Pocus, but Roger Dean sleeve art. *IH*

ESCAPE IN TIME

Various

★★★

Escape In Time

ÉL. CD

Strangely hypnagogic plunge into '60s British TV themes. Ranges from the swinging and brassy (Danger Man, Gurney Slade) to comedic and fusty (Steptoe & Son, Top Of The Form). Beware, not all versions are original. *IH*

FILTER REISSUES EXTRA

David Essex

★★★

Rock On

ZT'S. CD

History remembers the bland pin-up Essex, but his first three Jeff Wayne-produced albums spiced rock'n'roll revivalism with prescient synth moves, as on this '73 debut LP's title track. Essex's purse-lipped patois retains rich WTF value. *DE*

The Everly Brothers

★★★

Both Sides Of An Evening

HOODOO. CD/DL

This '61 all-standards LP – cut when the duo were estranged from their regular songwriters – showcases how Don and Phil transformed odd choices into disquieting personal tales. *AM*

In Embrace

★★★★

Passionfruit Pastels

GLASS REDUX. CD

Emotional, stark 1982 indie pop by Midlands duo with debt to Eyeless In Gaza and Young Marble Giants – the first single-artist release on Dave Barker's Glass label, now (with added singles) the first on its reissue-based resurgence. A ravishing rediscovery. *DE*

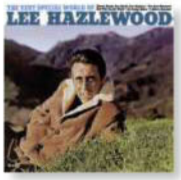
Kosmose

★★★★

Kosmic Music From The Black Country

SUB ROSA. CD/DL/LP

Previously unreleased set of the exploratory rough slag of recordings by Francis Pourcel and Alain Neffe's collective of oily-handed prog-kosmische engineers from Charleroi between 1973 and 1978. *AM*



Lee Hazlewood

★★★★

The Very Special World Of...

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD

Of three defiantly idiosyncratic post-Boots solo LPs Lee H made for MGM in 1966-68, this is the most coherent and effective, no-expense-spared romantic pop ballads underlit by melancholy autumnal glow. *AM*

Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly

★★★

Silky Soul/Back To Basics

ROBINSONGS. CD/DL

Beverly's delicious tenor, sweet melodies and the cool, lilty funk of Maze were a mid-'80s joy. These sets ('89, '93) were a final high. Somebody's Else's Arms and Silky Soul the picks. *GB*

Melanie

★★★★

Stoneground Words

MORELLO. CD/DL

A step away from the pop success of Brand New Key, this 1972 LP is something else, soaring, personal pieces of Brechtian musical theatre, located between Marianne's *Broken English* and David Ackles' *American Gothic*. *AM*

Nectarine No.9

★★★★

Saint Jack

FOREVER HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

1995 peak from Edinburgh Fire Engineer Davey Henderson's crew, melding beatnik swipes and afterhours sorrow, plus ashtray heart commentary by Jock Scot. Extras: nine Peel session tracks, including a cover of Nico's These Days. *KC*

Odetta

★★★

It's Impossible

FLC. CD

No-frills reissue of Alabama singer's 1976 live set. Plenty of flourish and vibrancy to this stripped back recording at Stockholm's Best Of Harlem club. Her singing voice is enchanting; her inter-song chat, endearingly charming. *PS*

OMD

★★★

Access All Areas

EDSEL. CD+DVD

Wirral analogue futurists live in Nottingham, 1980. It's short at 22 mins but you get early singles Messages, Enola Gay and phone box salute Red Frame White Light. Singer Andy McCluskey dances as if alone throughout. *IH*

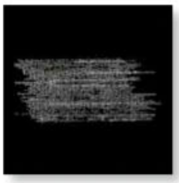
Rose Royce

★★★★

Strikes Again!

BBR. CD/DL

Impressive mix of driving funk (First Come, First Served; Do It, Do It) and ballads (Love Don't Live Here Anymore; I'm In Love) from 1978 on Norman Whitfield-produced band's third album and last solid LP. The filler was coagulating. *GB*



Ty Segall

★★★

Ty Rex

GONER. CD/DL/LP

Comp of previously vinyl-only Marc Bolan covers by West Coast garage psych prodigy Segall, who makes T.Rex sound like Hawkwind on Buick MacKane. His melodicism suits Tyrannosaurus Rex's hippy sorcery to a T on Cat Black. *JB*

Various

★★★★

Georgie Fame Heard Them Here First

ACE. CD

Fame's club days provide a dazzling collection of soul, R&B and jazz cuts. This set is not just illuminating, but with Fats Domino, Joe Tex and more, it's an instant soundtrack for a swinging party. *PS*

Various

★★★★

The Underground Records Anthology

HARMLESS. CD

To celebrate house music's 30th, club historian Bill Brewster goes mid '80s to early '90s with 3-CDs of the Chicago imprint's synthi-funk tracks for all-night jacking. With Tyree, Fast Eddie and other flat-top hair kings. *IH*

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Elton John, Animal Collective, Yoko Ono, The Cult, Emma Pollock, Field Music (pictured), Dion, Emitt Rhodes, Andrew Weatherall, Mavis Staples and more.

Andy Martin

Boogie Sunderland: living the *Mush* life, Leatherface touring line-up (from left), Frankie Stubbs, Dickie Hammond, Andrew Laing and Andy Crighton.

Under The Skin

This month, discovered stirring under rock's permafrost of oblivion, inspiring indie-punk majesty from the North-East of England.

Leatherface

Mush

ROUGHNECK, 1991

When Leatherface guitarist Richard 'Dickie' Hammond passed away in October, aged 50, it marked the true death of arguably the UK's greatest modern punk band. In defiance of Hammond's passing however, the music his band made – fierce yet melancholic proto-indie rock – will never fade to dust.

Birthed in 1989, the story of Sunderland's Leatherface takes in break-ups, reformations and an open door policy on bassists that borders on daft. Yet, it's the line-up for their third album, 1991's widely revered *Mush*, that's viewed as the definitive incarnation, showing Hammond and gravel-lunged singer/ guitarist Frankie Stubbs at their united best, the sounds of their handmade Gordon Smith guitars entwining. "We could never play what each other played," said Hammond of his work with Stubbs. "so we just made up stuff of our own that sounded good together."

"We were an extremely hardworking band," recalls Stubbs today. "We practised 10 'til 6 every day, Monday to Friday. We never practised with vocals. We didn't have a PA. But it meant everyone knew their parts inside out."

Having made their album debut in 1989 with *Cherry Knowle*, *Mush* would be the first time the band would leave their native North-East to make a record. Stubbs describes the decision to record in London as "daunting".

"We went to The Greenhouse Studio [on Provost Street, N1]," says the singer. "We had never been anywhere with more than 16 tracks and the Greenhouse had 48. The label [Roughneck] had booked us in for six days. The previous two albums [*Cherry Knowle* plus 1990's *Fill Your Boots*] had only taken three days apiece, and cost no more than 300 quid to record. This album was going to cost £2,000!"

Yet the band's sound blossomed. *Mush* is a record spoken of with reverence, as representing a kind of emotional, yearning template for such disparate modern day hardcore types as Hot Water Music, Avail and The Dillinger Four. 'The British Hüsker Dü' would be the elevator pitch, and not one too bold.

"Laurence Bell [now of Domino] was our friendly face from Roughneck," recalls Stubbs. "He'd booked us into a cheap B&B. I let him listen to a couple of songs which had rough vocals on them. I can play the guitar without any care in the world, but to this day I shit myself when it comes to vocal time. I couldn't tell if Laurence's smile and nod was genuine or record company genuine. I did believe, and now know, that Laurence was very genuine."

In the studio, the songs the band had brought to the capital in embryonic form (and inside a plastic "non-Sony" walkman) began to take shape.

"The engineer was a tiny fellow called Paul Tipler," says Stubbs. "On the first day the rhythm section recorded their parts and went home. On the second, the third and half day, Dickie would record his parts. I took a little bit longer, holding off the singing I think… I drank an unbelievable amount of tea. [But] by day four, I was struggling. We never had booze in the studio, but then Tipler pulls out a bottle of single malt whisky. A present from Lee Brilleaux for his help on some Dr. Feelgood stuff. I had a slug and sang the whole record in one go, stopping every three songs for another sip. Dickie wouldn't have a drink. 'No son, I am drunk on hearing these songs for the first time. This is going to be the greatest record ever!'"

For all Stubbs's insecurity, *Mush* is a record rich in words that matter deeply to many. Consider the playful nostalgia of stand-out cut Springtime, or the whisky-stained closing time philosophy of Not Superstitious, the words written at the tail end of the aforementioned Dr. Feel-good-facilitated binge. These were kitchen sink dramas that told stories of young dreamers, fighting the drudgery of Thatcher's Britain. "I had a ritual for writing words," says Stubbs. "I had my chair, a black vinyl affair. A piece of board that went across the arms. A hard-backed black book, thick paper. No lines. A good quality Parker gel pen, black ink. An ashtray, papers, Drum tobacco. A side table with a bottle of red wine and a glass. I was convinced without just one of these things I could not write."

Mush was immediately acclaimed. Yet as well as inspiring a generation of indie punks, it also allowed the band to escape a scene they felt constricted by.

"I remember the actual gig it happened at," says Stubbs. "We were playing in Bath, ironically the crusty cider-punk capital of the UK, and all that lot wanted to hear was the first album, *Cherry Knowle*. They would never pay in. They would steal your T-shirts and records. I watched the audience change right in front of my eyes. These young kids pushing these big burned-out dinosaurs of crusty punk out of the way. We were always a punk band – we just wanted rid of the crust. And, yeah, I enjoyed playing much more when we were not waiting for the fights to start."

What followed was a career rich in the sort of drama that can only follow idealistic souls making rock and roll below the breadline. But in *Mush* Leatherface achieved immortality.

James McMahon

> "I HAD A SLUG OF SINGLE MALT WHISKY AND SANG THE WHOLE RECORD IN ONE GO."
> Frankie Stubbs

LEATHERFACE

CREDITS

Tracks: I Want The Moon / How Lonely / I Don't Want To Be The One To Say It / Pandora's Box / Not A Day Goes By / Not [redacted] / Springtime [redacted] The Real [redacted] Potato / [redacted] / Dead [redacted] nosphere

Recorded: The [redacted] London N1, May 1991

Released: September 1991

[redacted] Frank N.W. Stubbs (guitar, vocals), Richie Hammond (guitar, vocals), Steven 'The Eagle' Charlton (bass), Andrew Laing (drums, vocals)

Engineer: Paul Tipler

Available: remastered on vinyl, Fire, 2015

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ROGERWILCO

Jeff Tweedy

Alt-country pioneer, experimental magus and transformative producer.

By Chris Nelson.

Jeff Tweedy could have been content to carry the flag for alternative country music. Instead, he has remained too curious to simply assume the mantle of a new Gram Parsons. Casualties of his restlessness have included a half-dozen band members and contracts with two record labels. The fruits, though, have included songs that are often poignant and occasionally puzzling; stages shared with Sonic Youth and Bob Dylan; a significant role in unveiling the weirder side of Woody Guthrie; and Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, universally hailed as one of the best rock albums of the 2000s.

Tweedy started playing guitar and bass in the early 1980s, alongside Jay Farrar in Uncle Tupelo. When the band named their first album after The Carter Family's 1936 song No Depression, they inadvertently christened a movement for musicians eager to explore country's old-time roots. But even then, Tweedy was no re-enactor. Farrar killed the band with his departure after four albums, and Tweedy released Wilco's alt-country debut *A.M.* just 11 months later, in 1995.

The fantastic peddler: Wilco (from left) Mikael Jorgensen, Nels Cline, Jeff Tweedy, Pat Sansone, John Stirratt (not pictured, Glenn Kotche).

> **"YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT... ONE OF THE BEST ALBUMS OF THE 2000s."**

And then it really got interesting. A new collaborator, Jay Bennett, was here and gone in three discs, but that was enough to oblige Tweedy's instincts as a pop composer. Wilco's line-up stabilised in 2004 and the band has built a devoted following with albums, books, films and their own Solid Sound Festival. Through it all, Tweedy has produced artists like Richard Thompson and Mavis Staples, and played with Golden Smog and Loose Fur, his combo with experimentalist Jim O'Rourke.

Tweedy continues to pursue new avenues. In 2015, he took an unwonted approach with Wilco, bringing the band nearly complete recordings and having players add to them piecemeal. The group surprise-released the album, which, apropos of nothing, was called *Star Wars*. It was their best received in years.

CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Jeff Tweedy LPs. Next month we want your Bee Gees Top 10. Send your selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Bee Gees' and we'll print the best comments.

Mavis Staples
One True Vine

10 Mavis Staples
One True Vine

ANTI- 2013 **£11.50** DOWNLOAD **£7.99**

You Say: "Weighty gospel ruminations by a true great." J Robertson, via e-mail

Tweedy produces, plays most instruments and composes three songs on this ruminative set by the gospel great, following their Grammy-winning 2010 set *You Are Not Alone*. Throughout, he nurtures without exaggerating his own role (though he does inject some buzz guitar into I Like The Things About Me). A faithful take on Funkadelic's Can You Get To That would've played nicely in a vintage Staple Singers show, and the producer is especially adept at drawing out pain and persistence. In his plainspoken lyrics to Jesus Wept, Tweedy captures the need to assure the dying we'll be OK after they're gone. A cover of Low's Holy Ghost is all hushed determination, with just a hint of doubt.

Wilco • a ghost is born

4 Wilco
A Ghost Is Born

NONESUCH 2004 **£8.87** DOWNLOAD **£5.99**

You Say: "Almost every track still regularly appears in Wilco live sets 12 years later." Chris Atherton, via e-mail

Even without the 15-minute tone experiment Less Than You Think, this would be an envelope-pusher for some. The album opens with a lyric about domestic violence, followed by a squall of guitar. Now the band's sole guitarist after the exit of Jay Bennett, Tweedy's solos on the krautrocker Spiders (Kidsmoke) are so impressive that Rolling Stone once mistakenly attributed them to future band member and guitar genius Nels Cline. Amid the tough subject matter, Tweedy's humour squeezes through the cracks. The Late Greats sends up both music executives and music obsessives, lauding an invented band whose purity rests on the fact that they not only weren't signed, they never even played a concert.

Anton Corbijn, Getty Images

9 Tweedy

Sukierae

ANTI- 2014 £7.99 DOWNLOAD £9.69

You Say: "Spencer Tweedy is a chip off the old block, especially on Wait For Love." Mike Bennett, via e-mail

This restrained double disc (20 tracks culled from an initial song cache of 90) *Sukierae* (sue-key-ray) is a family affair. Its title is the nickname of Tweedy's wife, who was being treated for lymphoma while it was recorded. The sessions offered something of a retreat for Tweedy and his drummer son Spencer, who can play it straight but also has a gift for intriguingly unorthodox rhythms which give his dad's tunes a hurry-up when necessary. Lyrics befit the family theme, touching on childhood, death and the living and growth between. Please Don't Let Me Be So Understood even nods at Tweedy's own Misunderstood, with a repetitive shout of "Bor-ing!" mirroring the crescendo of that Wilco classic.

8 Wilco

Alpha Mike Foxtrot: Rare Tracks 1994-2014

NONESUCH 2014 £26.68 DOWNLOAD £24.99

You Say: "Wilco's off-cuts contain more gems than some bands' entire careers." Barry Gilbert, via e-mail

Four discs, 77 tracks and almost five hours of rarities, remixes and works in progress, this set includes loads of covers (Byrds, Big Star, Steely Dan, Daniel Johnston and more), but the best are a fragile I Shall Be Released, cut live with Fleet Foxes, and a simultaneously exhausted but assertive James Alley Blues with Roger McGuinn. Pop gems The Good Part and A Magazine Called Sunset prove the songs that made it onto *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* only tell part of the story. The Thanks I Get and a live Hate It Here feel like lost '70s soul (Thanks… was penned for Solomon Burke): funny, wounded, self-critical.

7 Golden Smog

Stay Golden, Smog: The Best of Golden Smog – The Rykodisc Years

RYKO 2009 £14.75 DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "Jeff's Pecan Pie is my favourite track here." OT Shaw, via e-mail

The Smog are alt country's Traveling Wilburys, with recurring members Tweedy, Dan Murphy (Soul Asylum), Gary Louris (Jayhawks) and Kraig Johnson (Run Westy Run) joined on occasion by members of The Replacements, Big Star and others. This collection includes Tweedy's best contributions. Pecan Pie is comfortably slight, but the project isn't a goof. Lost Love counsels a broken couple not to take it all so hard. Radio King is a paean to rock'n'roll devotion. The most touching track, and best of the Smog catalogue, is Please Tell My Brother, an acoustic love letter to family members spread far and wide.

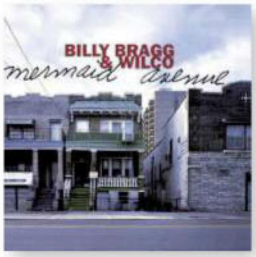
6 Uncle Tupelo

Anodyne

SIRE 1993, RHINO REISSUE 2003 £15.99 DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "In another reality they didn't split and still make records as good as this." James Muirhead, via e-mail

Tweedy's band with Jay Farrar reached a creative apex on this album largely because Tweedy finally came into his own – if Farrar hadn't been the one to leave, their individual skills and wills would have eventually pulled them apart. Acuff-Rose is unbridled joy, another nod to the power of song, while We've Been Had has a ball ripping the singers who invariably let us down. The Long Cut feels like Tweedy's dual olive branch and ultimatum to his old friend – "We've been in a deep rut/And it's been killing me" – while New Madrid, still in Wilco setlists, continues to confound. Is his love alive? What does "caroms over the landfill" mean? In the end it doesn't matter: this wistfulness is undeniable.



5 Billy Bragg & Wilco

Mermaid Avenue: The Complete Sessions

NONESUCH 2012 £19.93 DOWNLOAD £21.99

You Say: "Perfect conduits for Woody Guthrie's politics." Paul Radcliffe, via e-mail

In the early '90s, Woody Guthrie's daughter handed Bragg unrecorded lyrics and asked him for music. Bragg brought in Wilco. It was something of a double-edged sword: Wilco strengthened Bragg's contributions, but stole the show with their own. Tweedy et al set politics aside, often in favour of Guthrie's religious material: Airline To Heaven is straight-up evangelism, while Blood Of The Lamb's carnival sound accentuates the creepy side of Christian symbolism. The Woody-Wilco connection has lasted, and California Stars is today as engrained in Wilco's repertoire as any original.

3 Wilco

Being There

REPRISE 1997 £7.99 DOWNLOAD £9.99

You Say: "You can't go wrong… great starting points." Vladimir Mihajlovic, MOJO Facebook

With *Being There*, Tweedy proved he had no truck with No Depression formalists. Dreamer In My Dreams visited the Faces, while Hotel Arizona went to more outré rock spaces. For the first time of many, the band issued different interpretations of the same song. Disc one's Outtasite (Outta Mind) is a driving rock romp; disc two's Outta Mind (Outta Sight) is Beach Boys pop. But Tweedy's ambition is clearest on the discordant epics Misunderstood and Sunken Treasure which open each of the double album's halves. Misunderstood is gorgeous and grounded in self-loathing ("I'd like to thank you all for nothin'"). Sunken Treasure's lyrics are more cryptic, but contain what plays like a sincere admission: "Music is my saviour/And I was maimed by rock'n'roll."

2 Wilco

Summerteeth

REPRISE 1999 £7.99 DOWNLOAD £9.99

You Say: "Still the most accessible album." Paul Meagher, MOJO Facebook

Few listeners expected the pop brilliance of *Summerteeth*. Tweedy and Jay Bennett ensconced themselves in the studio to create a lush and layered masterpiece, to the disgruntlement of bassist John Stirratt and drummer Ken Coomer who were sidelined amid the mania. The title ELT is short for "every little thing", but it's purposefully just one letter away from 'ELO'. The singer's state in any of these songs is precarious. How To Fight Loneliness is a heartbreakingly calculated instruction manual. Via Chicago's opening, "I dreamed about killing you again last night and it felt all right to me," may appear combative, but it's actually a confession of someone hopelessly lost. Imagine Lou Reed and Brian Wilson as bunkmates.

1 Wilco

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot

NONESUCH 2002 £9.87 DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "They manage(d) to bottle lightning and capture something of the *Zeitgeist*." James Muro, MOJO Facebook

YHF revealed to many the music industry's perversities: Warners paid for it, rejected it as hitless, then had a subsidiary pay to get it back. This is the album where everything coheres: sounds that are addictively melodic and experimentally dissonant; lyrics that are sentimental and loving, angry and fearful. In his mixing of the source tapes, Jim O'Rourke stripped away layers of noise to ensure the songs' cores were clear. In the end, the album's perfection justified every choice Tweedy made, and cemented his reputation as one of the most vital creators of the past quarter-century.

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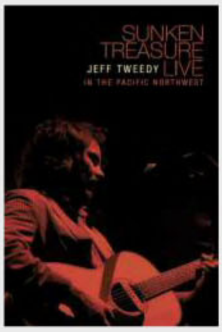


Some of Tweedy's best performances take place on solo tours. The DVD Sunken Treasure: Live In The Pacific Northwest (Warner Music Vision, £7.14) is culled from his 2006 outing and includes songs stretching back to Uncle Tupelo. The documentary I Am Trying To Break Your Heart (Plexi Film £19.99) shows Wilco dissolve and regroup making *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*. For the complete story, check out Greg Kot's bio Wilco: Learning How To Die (Broadway, £13.99). The Wilco Book (PictureBox, £21.56) lavishly documents the creation of *A Ghost Is Born*.

Vintage vine: Tweedy with Mavis Staples.

Let's go to work: Frank Sinatra touches down in London, July 18, 1974.

Pack up, let's fly

In Sinatra's centenary year, two efforts to make sense of the life and art of The Voice. By Chris Ingham.

Sinatra: The Chairman

★★★★

James Kaplan

SPHERE. £30

Frank Sinatra: An Extraordinary Life

★★★

Spencer Leigh

MCNIDDER & GRACE. £15

Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy, Moviestore Collection Ltd/Alamy

Finding Sinatra literature that illuminated his art when the man was still alive was surprisingly difficult. Most contemporaneous books by professional entertainment writers (Arnold Shaw, Earl Wilson) or scandalmongers (Kitty Kelley) were more concerned with Sinatra's floozies and fisticuffs than his output as singer and actor. Granted, Sinatra's ego-fuelled life as a womanising libertine, friend of presidents and mobsters, charismatic businessman and philanthropist, equal parts charmer and monster, is extraordinarily diverting and a lot easier to write about than, say, the transcendental effect of his best singing.

Later, Will Friedwald brought long-overdue enthusiasm and insight into Sinatra's musical world while Pete Hamill penned a clever, generous character study. But their side-stepping of Sinatra's wider life (too cool to be dealing with gangsters and wives), begged the question: was there ever going to be a book big enough to encompass everything that Sinatra did, was and meant?

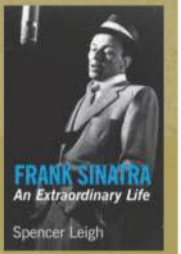
Enter novelist/journalist James Kaplan, who takes his monumental task very seriously. Like his first volume of this 1,700 page biography, Frank: Making Of A Legend (2010), Sinatra: The Chairman goes to some lengths to be even-handed, protective of FS as often as he is sceptical, and offering multiple scenarios for anecdotes without a definitive narrative – eg, the "wrong door raid" involving Sinatra assisting Joe DiMaggio to catch Marilyn Monroe in a tryst. He also takes the time and trouble to intersperse the timeline grind with substantial and astute asides on each record, film and TV show, from the 1950s-1990s.

While his writerliness imposes itself throughout, particularly when speculating on Sinatra's psychology ("all the success in the world was only a temporary solace to a mind as complex and fragile as his"), his author's voice soon becomes a temperate reassurance as the reader is once more boggled by Sinatra's fascinating contradictions. If it lacks some of the hip authority of Friedwald, the guilty-pleasure detail of fan books like Sinatra Treasures or even the juiciness of the mean-spirited gossipers, Kaplan's magnificent two-volume effort represents the closest to a definitive, one-stop Sinatra tome available.

SINATRA
THE CHAIRMAN
JAMES KAPLAN

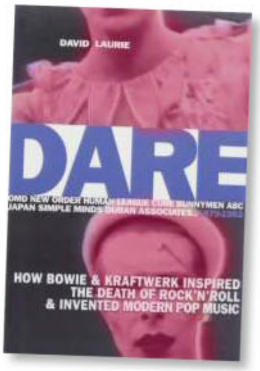
"THE CLOSEST TO A ONE-STOP SINATRA TOME AVAILABLE."

Spencer Leigh's 350-pager is by comparison a primer, but distinguishes itself from the pack by dividing each chapter into a contextualising essay (on Crosby, the Great American Songbook, arrangers, 'career' songs like My Way) and FS biography. Leigh canters through Sinatra's career with snappy shorthand (on Kim Novak in The Man With The Golden Arm: "Sinatra offered to 'coach' her and didn't mind multiple takes while she was around. Wonder why."), impish conjecture (on Frank's lean years: "the general public… didn't like Sinatra as a person, so he wasn't selling anymore"), a librarian's eye for dates and credits, and a healthy dose of irreverence. Leigh's background information on repertoire is always welcome and his appalled treatise on the tawdry history and atmosphere of Las Vegas is a highlight. It needed an index, but Frank Sinatra: An Extraordinary Life is a likeable, characterful contribution.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Frank *didn't* have an affair with Grace Kelly [Kaplan].
- Former Downbeat editor and Capitol producer Dave Dexter though FS to be "one of the vilest, unadmirable men on Planet Earth" [Leigh].
- Film director Stanley Kramer thought Sinatra could have been the best actor in the world "if he prepared…" [Leigh].
- Johnny Concho (1956), Sinatra's self-produced, long-unavailable western was "truly terrible" [Kaplan] and "a good movie" [Leigh].


DAVID LAURIE
DARE
HOW BOWIE & KRAFTWERK INSPIRED THE DEATH OF ROCK'N'ROLL & INVENTED MODERN POP MUSIC

Dare: How Bowie & Kraftwerk Inspired The Death Of Rock'n'Roll Music & Invented Modern Pop Music

★★★

David Laurie

SOMETHING IN CONSTRUCTION. £10

Both the most *and* the least accurate book about the period when "futuristic sounds warbled off and on".

Reading much of the serious commentary on the era 1979 to 1982, it is hard not to draw the conclusion that the period has been distorted by the intelligentsia and the nation was listening to 23 Skidoo and A Certain Ratio. In reality, the vast majority of music fans were watching Top Of The Pops and buying Duran Duran records. David Laurie nails the schism perfectly in this turbo-charged enthusathon of a book. With the personal pronoun prominent, Laurie describes a pop world denatured by Bowie, and then Kraftwerk, and built up again by wayward experimentalists mixing the bizarre and the tuneful. But, sadly, the book also contains many factual infelicities, thankfully most of them minor, although a short section on Kraftwerk, for example, has seven factual mistakes. A remake/remodel is in urgent need on this otherwise wonderful book.

David Buckley

Eve's Hollywood

★★★★★

Eve Babitz

NYRB CLASSICS, £10.99

Long out-of-print LA memoir from Southern California's "daughter of the wasteland".

Wikipedia defines Eve Babitz chiefly by the men in her life. It's a reductive portrait, but a compelling list: Jim Morrison, Steve Martin, Stephen Stills, Harrison Ford… The daughter of a Cajun artist mother and Russian émigré father (LA Philharmonic violinist Sol Babitz), Eve was raised in a bohemian Hollywood household where guests included Bernard Herrmann, Jelly Roll Morton and Kenneth Patchen; her godfather was Igor Stravinsky. Writing from her teens, around the time she noticed her effect on "sunbleached, eyelashed young men", Babitz became an immersive "groupie-adventuress" chronicler of Southern California's sexual awakening and narcotic fall. Moving from the Dexamyl debutantes of Hollywood High to the bad acid bring-downs of Manson Family alumni, and retirement due to "overboogie", Babitz writes like a jazz-hip anti-Didion, skating serenely over the glimmering surfaces of her sun-kissed Shangri-La, blithely aware of the dangerous depths below, but having too much fun to look down.

Andrew Male

Growing Up With The Jam

★★★★

Nicky Weller And Gary Crowley

NICETIME PRODUCTIONS. £25

Glossy coffee-table softback created for The Jam's About The Young Idea exhibition.

GROWING UP WITH...

Last summer's Jam celebration at Somerset House, curated by his sister Nicky, offered a trove of goodies (guitars, notebooks, clothes). Shots of those powerful Weller/Foxton/Buckler totems are reproduced here, together with the recollections of 100 or so Jam-touched musicians, photographers, friends, journos and collaborators. What's fascinating are the minute new fragments of the story that emerge: Andy Partridge chatting dub with Paul at the *Setting Sons* sessions; Status Quo's Rick Parfitt, a Woking native, later asking whatever happened to the amp he lent them circa 1975; Tony Parsons leading a secret mission with the band to ambush Pete Townshend on Paul's 19th birthday. With her writer's eye, Louise Wener writes movingly of seeing them at last: "Wembley Arena smells of piss and cigarettes and I love it." An illuminating document.

Pat Gilbert

KATE
JOHN CARDER BUSH
INSIDE THE RAINBOW

Kate: Inside The Rainbow

★★★★

John Carder Bush

SPHERE. £26

Insightful words and pictures, part two, from the brother Bush.

As he explains here, John Carder Bush has had many roles in his sister's career. "Driver, bookkeeper, bodyguard, executive producer, occasional backing vocalist, poet and narrator." But it's his photographs for which he's most well known. This 280-plus-page book is the updated, director's-cut version of Cathy, his 1986 volume of Kate pictures. Inside The Rainbow traces the story from schoolgirl Kate raiding the dressing-up box to gauche teenage pop star, grown-up art rocker and the lesser-spotted mature songwriter of 2011's *50 Words For Snow.* Long-term Kate-watchers will lose precious hours here, absorbing John Carder's memories and thoughts, and perusing previously unseen outtakes, video-shoot stills from Army Dreamers and Breathing, among others, and handwritten notes from *Hounds Of Love*. In the absence of an autobiography, Inside The Rainbow might be as close as anyone gets to the real Kate Bush.

Mark Blake

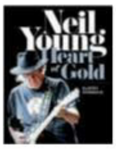
Neil Young: Heart Of Gold

★★★

Harvey Kubernik

OMNIBUS. £19.95

Glossy, magazine-style biog of the grizzled singer/songwriter and guitar hero.



It seems there is no end to the ways you can slice the Neil Young cucumber. Usually his career is approached by biographers with a deeply furrowed brow, the nearest to light-hearted "bantz" probably being Young's 2014 memoir Special Deluxe, where he charted his life alongside the carbon footprint of whichever car he owned at the time. Hearts Of Gold mixes great photos and long-time Young observer Kubernik's interviews with family, friends and collaborators over the years, plus cut'n'paste snippets from other sources. Kubernik is upfront about his book being a celebration rather than a critique, with even the rummest albums considered merely "no completely unqualified success", which means Heart Of Gold is one for fans of both Young and coffee tables. And there's nothing wrong with that.

Andy Fyfe

Rebirth Of The Cool: Discovering The Art Of Robert James Campbell

★★★★

Jessica Ferber

POWERHOUSE. £28.50

A snapshot of New York's music scene by unjustly forgotten lensman.

Robert James Campbell died homeless in a shelter in 2001, leaving behind boxes crammed full of photos. The black and white images inside, some published in the Village Voice and Downbeat magazine, but the majority previously unseen, frame life on the street and inside the jazz and folk clubs of '60s New York. A small fraction of them collected here reveals a major talent for capturing the human condition. Every mood and emotion is present; the gap toothed grin of an elated Son House after signing with John Hammond; Chuck Berry duck-walking at Newport Festival in thrall to rock'n'roll; Fred Neil surprised by the camera on-stage in New York; an apprehensive Mississippi John Hurt waiting to play the Gaslight Café; an exhausted Myrlie Evers after the assassination of her husband Medgar Evans, surely in line as one of the most poignant and personal portraits ever.

Lois Wilson

Fred Neil, caught in the act in New York by Robert James Campbell.

Robert James Campbell

They shoot, they score

The film of how N.W.A ushered in the gangsta rap era – now the world's biggest-grossing music biopic. By Andy Cowan.

Straight Outta Compton

★★★

UNIVERSAL, DIR: F. GARY GRAY. DVD

Just like the album it takes its name from, F. Gary Gray's retelling of the rise of N.W.A opens with the pledge: "You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge." A mostly positive look at the rags-to-riches rise of the "world's most dangerous group", it ambitiously spans their birth, fall-out and subsequent careers, right up to Dr. Dre's departure from the scarily unhinged world of Death Row Records.

Gray, a Compton native who directed Ice Cube's 1995 stoner comedy Friday, is particularly strong at evoking the late-'80s ambience of his locale. Cameras bob and weave athletically as Eazy-E (Jason Mitchell, a revelation) puts up his ill-gotten drug collateral to finance the band, Ice Cube (played by Cube's son O'Shea Jackson Jr) doles out the street poetics and Dr. Dre (Corey Hawkins) lays down the tracks that will shake hip hop loose from its East Coast moorings, ushering in the gangsta rap era.

While the young untried actors' chemistry taps into what made this group so revolutionary, their veteran rock manager, Jerry Heller, is cast as its big bad wolf (Heller is suing). As with his portrayal of Dr Eugene Landy in 2015's Brian Wilson film Love & Mercy, Paul Giamatti exudes a greasy gravitas as he comes through on his promise to Eazy ("I can make you legit") before seeming to royally rip him off.

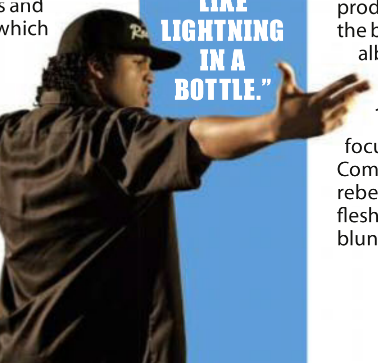
Gray is particularly strong at capturing the time's pressure-cooker atmosphere; an abrasive scene where N.W.A are swarmed upon by cops outside the studio becomes inspiration for their generational anthem Fuck Tha Police. Their swift rise to swaggering antiheroes, using a threatening letter from the FBI to their advantage, climaxes when they defy official orders and perform the song in Detroit, which causes a riot.

It's the last time N.W.A are truly united and also the point this unwieldy, near three-hour Director's Cut starts to unravel. A saggy second half of contractual hand-wringing struggles to bear the weight of so much plot as Ice Cube departs over Heller's fiscal chicanery and the parties trade public insults (Cube's vicious dis-fest No Vaseline raging "You can't be the Nigga 4 Life crew/With a white Jew telling you what to do"). Dre mystifyingly throws in his lot with 'hard man' ex-bodyguard Suge Knight (played with genuinely terrifying force by R. Marcos Taylor) before a reunion, partially spurred by the Rodney King trial, is scuppered when Eazy-E develops full-blown AIDS.

Gray's chronological approach and rush to cover so much ground dampens the emotional charge of Eazy-E's swift physical deterioration, while there's a sheen of Hollywood myth-making in the subsequent tales of Cube and Dre (who, along with Eazy-E's widow, Tomica Woods-Wright, were hands-on producers) that completely sidesteps the base misogyny of the second N.W.A album, 1991's *Efil4zaggin*, and Dre's violent 1991 attack on journalist Dee Barnes.

It could have used a narrower focus, yet at its best Straight Outta Compton snares N.W.A's youthful rebellion like lightning in a bottle, fleshing out the origins of a group whose blunt influence is still keenly felt.

The gang's all here: (main, from left) MC Ren (Aldis Hodge), DJ Yella (Neil Brown Jr), Dr. Dre (Corey Hawkins), Eazy-E (Jason Mitchell), Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson Jr); (insets, from top left) cruising for members; Dre DJ-ing; Paul Giamatti as Jerry Heller; under arrest.



> "SNARES N.W.A'S YOUTHFUL REBELLION LIKE LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE."

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Gray commissioned a Cadillac V-100 Commando battering ram, used widely by the LAPD in the '80s, to replicate Eazy-E's escape from a drug dispute in the film's opening scenes.

Eazy-E's vocals, line by line, on 1987 signature tune Boyz-N-The-Hood.

- The actors, coached by veteran rapper WC, re-recorded *Straight Outta Compton* in its entirety to get into character.

SOUNDS OF THE CITY 2016

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GUY GARVEY

SATURDAY 02 JULY
HAÇIENDA CLASSICAL

WEDNESDAY 06 JULY
JAMES BAY

THURSDAY 07 JULY
STEREOPHONICS

FRIDAY 08 JULY
CATFISH AND THE BOTTLEMEN

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james
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Fri 13th May
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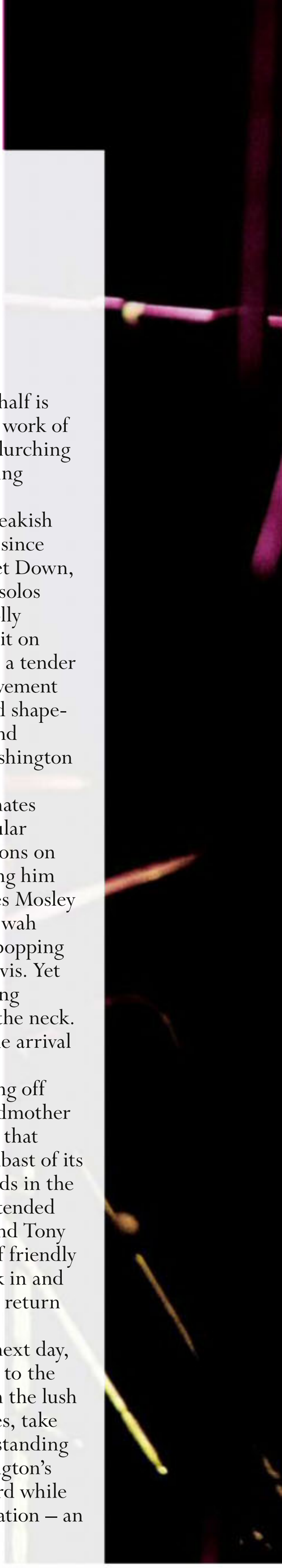


Sound the horn

It's freewheeling solos a go-go as vibrant Los Angeles bandleader wows the London Jazz Festival. By Andy Cowan.

Kamasi Washington

Barbican, London

The sell-out attraction at the London Jazz Festival brings together two of the hottest young acts from both sides of the Atlantic. Manchester's Mercury nominees, and recent Blue Note France signings, GoGo Penguin may baulk a little at the 'jazz' tag – their intricately plotted reveries rely more on textural variation than pat improvisation – but they're equally capable of summoning up heady atmospherics at will.

Chris Illingworth's minor key piano vamps and Rob Turner skittering breakbeats are often a backdrop for double bassist Nick Blacka to prove himself jazz's answer to Peter Hook with his bluff, atypically melodic lines. They dedicate the closing Unspeakable World to their friends in France, just 24 hours after gunmen and suicide bombers left 129 people dead and hundreds wounded in sustained terrorist attacks across the French capital. A little levity lands as the whirling dervishes of Lynn Paige's dance troupe Veils offset it with seamlessly synchronised balletics.

As soon as he ambles purposefully on stage Kamasi Washington cuts an imposing figure. Bedecked in diaphanous terracotta robes and a capacious beanie hat, the 34-year-old virtuosic tenor saxophonist is a curious mix of the humble and assured as he offers to "send you home with the best sound you ever heard in your life".

Saved from the temptation to join local street gang the Rollin 60s Neighborhood Crips (sic) by his teenage immersion in rap and jazz, Washington's freewheeling contributions to Flying Lotus's *You're Dead!* and Kendrick Lamar's widely hymned *To Pimp A Butterfly* were little preparation for 2015's solo debut *The Epic*. The result of a month-long studio lock-in was a sprawling three-hour introduction that more than lived up to its name, as it channelled the spiritual vibes of bebop and free jazz deities John Coltrane and Donald Byrd over warm funk and soul undercurrents abetted by a 32-piece orchestra and a 20-strong choir.

Alongside the dual drummers of his seven-piece band The Next Step, the hard modal swing of opener Change Of The Guard makes the Coltrane connection explicit. Ringing pianos reminiscent of McCoy Tyner beckon Washington and trombonist Ryan Porter to duel on its central theme before its simple melody explodes into a fusillade of pummelling solos punched out with punkish force, their screeching intensity recalling Coltrane's late group work. The garrulously extended opener's second half is also a showcase for the gurning keytar work of Brandon 'Professor Boogie' Coleman, lurching from staccato space jazz to head-nodding G-Funk with preternatural ease.

His band's on-stage fluidity is no freakish accident. Friends who played together since their teens in collective West Coast Get Down, their uncanny ability to swan through solos before reuniting on-point appears wholly intuitive, and rarely like they're laying it on thick. A light in the storm arrives with a tender deep soul take on Debussy's piano movement Clair De Lune, sensuous humming and shape-throwing from singer Patrice Quinn and Porter's deep soloing still allowing Washington to steal in at the death with fiery glee.

The leader's generosity to his playmates continues with Re Run. "This is a regular upright bass, there's no motors or buttons on the back or a little dude in there helping him out," cautions Washington before Miles Mosley gets his fun in the sun, phase and wah wah pedals adding to the drama of its eye-popping homage to *On The Corner*-era Miles Davis. Yet Mosley also pushes it out farther, playing seemingly unreachable notes right off the neck.

The family vibe is extended with the arrival of his relatively slight father, soprano saxophonist Rickey Washington, playing off Quinn's smooth vocals on tender grandmother tribute Henrietta Our Hero. Yet while that steps far back from the orchestral bombast of its studio counterpart, Final Thought heads in the opposite direction. It opens with a distended drum-off between Ronald Bruner Jr and Tony Austin, executed in the night's spirit of friendly rivalry, before the full clique click back in and Washington's rasping, overblown solos return with crowd-thrilling vengeance.

Originally due to play in Paris the next day, Washington dedicates their every note to the beleaguered city before they close with the lush '70s soul vibes of The Rhythm Changes, take some selfies and take their leave. The standing ovations that erupt underscore Washington's unique ability to appeal to the old guard while reimagining jazz for the hip hop generation – an epic feat all by itself.

Curious orange: (right) Kamasi Washington gets transcendental at the London Jazz Festival; (bottom row, from left) Brandon 'Professor Boogie' Coleman; dancers from the Lynne Paige troupe; Miles Mosley; The Next Step (from left) Patrice Quinn, Tony Austin, Mosley, Washington, Ryan Porter, Ronald Bruner Jr.

> "LURCHING FROM STACCATO SPACE JAZZ TO HEAD-NODDING G-FUNK WITH PRETERNATURAL EASE."

Simon Fernandez (5)

@MILESMOSLEY
#THIS IS MY JAZZ

SETLIST
Change Of The Guard / Clair De Lune / Re Run / Henrietta Our Hero / Final Thought / The Rhythm Changes

Earthbound

"We're going to do a play based on your past." **Paul Trynka** watches a fascinating but uneven new play by David Bowie and Enda Walsh.

Lazarus

Theatre Workshop, New York

Thomas Newton is a mess. He sprawls on a blank floor, framed by blank walls which feature only a spacious refrigerator which holds a plentiful supply of drink and, on his far left, a vinyl player flanked by a triptych of David Bowie albums: *Scary Monsters*, *Young Americans* and *Aladdin Sane*. The fallen man – or rather, fallen alien – remains immobile, bathed in fluorescent glare as an expectant audience shuffle to their seats in the 200-capacity theatre in the East Village. There's a sense of electricity in the air, exemplified by a tall video-screen that will soon host a sequence of random images, newsreels, or even participants in the play. Behind, imprisoned by a glass screen like Hannibal Lecter in Silence Of The Lambs, are the seven musicians, headed by keyboardist and *The Next Day* collaborator Henry Hey.

Lazarus, written by Enda Walsh and Bowie, directed by Ivo van Hove is, in essence, a stripped-down sequel to the celebrated Man Who Fell To Earth film, with the action confined to Thomas Newton's stark apartment. Newton anaesthetises himself with drink, greeting blankly a stream of visitors, notably personal assistant Elly, aka Cristin Milioti, who exudes a kooky eroticism to which he's largely indifferent, and the curly-locked, blonde "Girl", Sophia Anne Caruso, who seems a figment of Newton's imagination, his homesickness for wife and daughter made flesh. Or maybe, Newton gradually realises, she's his ticket out of here.

Michael C. Hall, best known as titular villain of Dexter, is the Newton figure and therefore the play's linchpin. Unsurprisingly, Hall has confessed his giddying fear at the prospect of reinterpreting beloved Bowie songs in front of their vaunted creator. In the event, he's pretty much superb, both on the unfamiliar material – including the fantastic Lazarus, which veers from the simple Space Oddity-ish verse to lusciously-crafted, almost Bacharach chord sequences – and songs like It's No Game or Love Is Lost, which highlight the band's supernatural ability at summoning up churning, dense soundscapes without drowning out the dialogue. (Incidentally, there is no material from Bowie's abandoned soundtrack for the original movie).

Hall plays Newton as both impossibly old, and as a childish ingénue – shifts always echoed by the music. The lost child Newton watches Caruso tape a rocket out on the floor, and wonders whether it will enable his longed-for escape. But when sinister intruder Valentine – convincingly depicted by Michael Esper, who also sings a scintillating Dirty Boys – inveigles his way into his apartment, Newton unleashes his inner rage with Killing A Little Time, a turbulent, claustrophobic epic, its creepy minor-key guitar riff underpinning a torrent of lyrics: "I'm the choking man, the fading man, I'm the broken man." It's absolutely gripping, a superb juxtaposition of music, theatre and technology that stands as a new high-watermark of Bowie's cross-media achievements.

Space Oddity: Michael C. Hall stars as Thomas Newton (bottom right) in Ivo Van Hove's production of David Bowie and Enda Walsh's Lazarus; also starring (clockwise from right) Sophia Anne Caruso as "Girl"; Hall and Caruso; Hall and Cristin Milioti; Charlie Pollack with Hall; (from left) Michael Esper, Lynn Craig and Nicholas Christopher; the writer ponders script changes; Milioti and Bobby Moreno; Brynn Williams, Esper and Krystina Alabado.

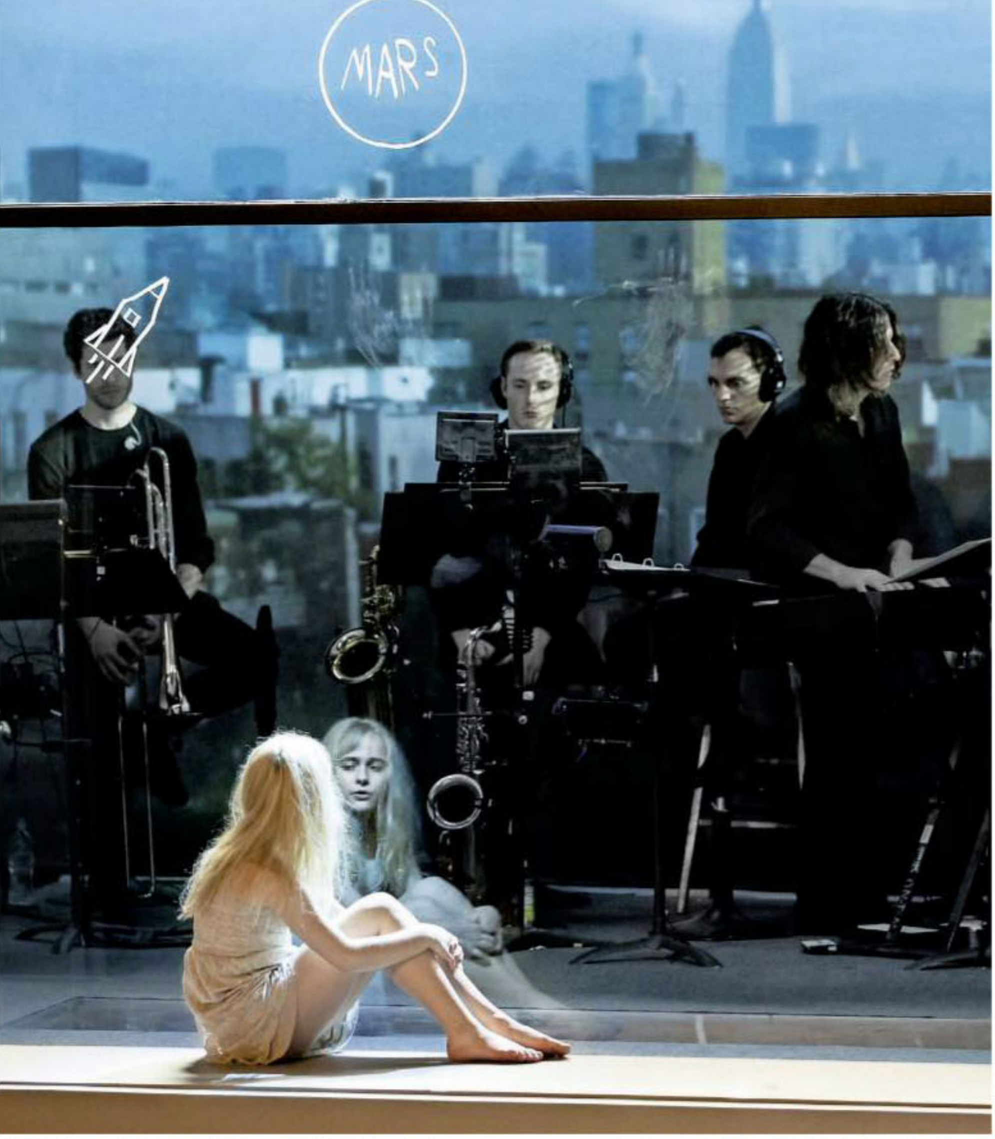
"LAZARUS IS, IN ESSENCE, A STRIPPED-DOWN SEQUEL TO THE CELEBRATED MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH FILM."

Then, inexplicably, it's followed by a moment of pure bathos as Caruso belts out Life On Mars. Suddenly this enigmatic messenger from the unconscious turns out to have popped over from Broadway – with all the obligatory over-emoting. It epitomises the central problem of this fascinating but uneven show; the dense, fractured songs drive the narrative forward, but the anthems – All The Young Dudes, Absolute Beginners – feel forced, and bring the performance crashing down to earth (this could change, of course, as a play often does during the previews). Yet before long there's another terrific new song, When I Met You, in which Newton and a Teenage Girl trade lines in a crescendo that culminates in Caruso's murder – or sacrifice – by the alien, a shocking denouement handled in visionary fashion by van Hove.

Finally, before Caruso's "Girl" takes her leave to let Newton escape, sprawled *Lodger*-like on his imaginary rocket, we hear an unmistakeable counter-melody before "Heroes" is played as a closing duet between Hall and Caruso. Never have I been more disappointed to hear a wonderful song. We'd expect a Queen show to close with We Are The Champions, but demand more from David Bowie.

At its core, Lazarus taps deep into the Bowie essence, or the Bowie persona (if there is any demarcation between the two): loneliness, the nature of Outsiderness, the yearning for transcendence. At its best, it is staggeringly beautiful – when Newton wrestles with his losses or when Alan Cumming, a disembodied, ghostly father figure projected on the screen, listens patiently while Caruso tries to work out her own identity. Frequently profound, if intermittently predictable, Lazarus shows that, under the skin, we are all aliens. But we can't all be heroes.

©Jan Versweyveld (8), Jimmy King



SETLIST

It's No Game / This Is Not America / Man Who Sold The World / Lazarus / Love Is Lost / Changes / Where Are We Now? / Absolute Beginners / The Dirty Boys / Killing A Little Time / Life On Mars / All The Young Dudes / Always Crashing In The Same Car / Valentine's Day / When I Met You / "Heroes"

Funny, peculiar: John Grant (centre) with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra at Reykjavík's Harpa Concert Hall.

A grand day out

In his adopted home country, Grant proves he can achieve anything he wants. By Kieron Tyler.

John Grant And The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra

Harpa Eldborg, Reykjavík

John Grant does not take the easy route. After the release of his third solo album, he could have relaxed and soaked up the warm glow cast by its reviews and Top 5 sales. But no, his first major show in the wake of *Grey Tickles, Black Pressure* marries him up with his regular live band, supporting vocals from Sísý Ey's Eyþórsdóttir sisters and the might of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. Choosing to showcase his new songs in the grandest possible manner suggests the album is perhaps a jumping-off point, maybe a way station to something even more surprising. In Reykjavík, Grant confirmed that he will not, cannot, stand still.

Grant has performed with an orchestra before: collaborating with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra resulted in a live album. But that was between releases and drew from firmly bedded-in albums. This concert comes five weeks after *Grey Tickles, Black Pressure*'s release and features eight of the new album's 12 songs in unique arrangements under conductor Christopher George. All in front of a sell-out audience at Reykjavík's magnificent, wood-panelled Harpa Concert Hall for Iceland Airwaves, the annual festival which this year sold 6,000 tickets abroad. Iceland is Grant's adopted home and the concert is a thank you to the country that has welcomed him.

If there is pressure, it doesn't show in an obvious way. There is, though, a dignified precision. Live, Grant is often loquacious, and hilariously so. It can take the sting from the rawness of, say, Magma Arrives with its protagonist who will "soon wish that he were dead". There are a few asides, but an unusual reticence ensures the evening is about the songs. Grant looks up at the balconies in wonder – evoking Princess Diana's bashful tilt of the head – and says "Hvernig er það að fara þarna?": Icelandic for "How's it going up there?"

Many of the songs performed are now classics, in the vein of Randy Newman, Elton John and even George Michael. Tonight, some of the newer ones feel like instant classics. The swooning strings augmenting Down Here add the grandeur of *Ocean Rain*-era Echo & The Bunnymen and the forward-motion swirl of David McWilliams' Days Of Pearly Spencer. It doesn't always gel: the opulent setting overwhelms Geraldine's tricksy melody.

Confoundingly, the electro-slanted Pale Green Ghosts and Black Blizzard shine like tense Lalo Schifrin film themes in their orchestrated configurations. Mars, Where Dreams Go To Die and – especially – It Doesn't Matter To Him are melt-in-the-mouth delicious. As is Grant's voice.

Such a demanding showcase tests Grant's limits. Though clearly awestruck by the actuality of what he had conceived, this courageous concert proves he can achieve anything he wants. And not by taking the easy path.

"HE SHOWCASES NEW SONGS IN THE GRANDEST POSSIBLE MANNER."

SETLIST

Grey Tickles, Black Pressure / Down Here / Marz / Geraldine / Global Warming / Where Dreams Go To Die / It Doesn't Matter To Him / Pale Green Ghosts / Black Blizzard / Magma Arrives / Glacier / Queen Of Denmark / Disappointing / GMF / No More Tangles / Drug / Caramel

Alexander Matukhno (3)

SHUGGIE OTIS

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Birmingham O$_2$ Institute2 **Thu 25 Feb**
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FROM THE JAM

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Oxford, O$_2$ Academy **Sat 08 Oct**
Cambridge, The Junction **Fri 14 Oct**
Salisbury, City Hall **Fri 28 Oct**
Sheffield, O$_2$ Academy2 **Sat 29 Oct**
Warwick, The Copper Rooms **Sun 30 Oct**
Nottingham, Rock City **Fri 04 Nov**
Norwich, The Waterfront **Sat 05 Nov**
Northampton, Roadmenders **Fri 11 Nov**
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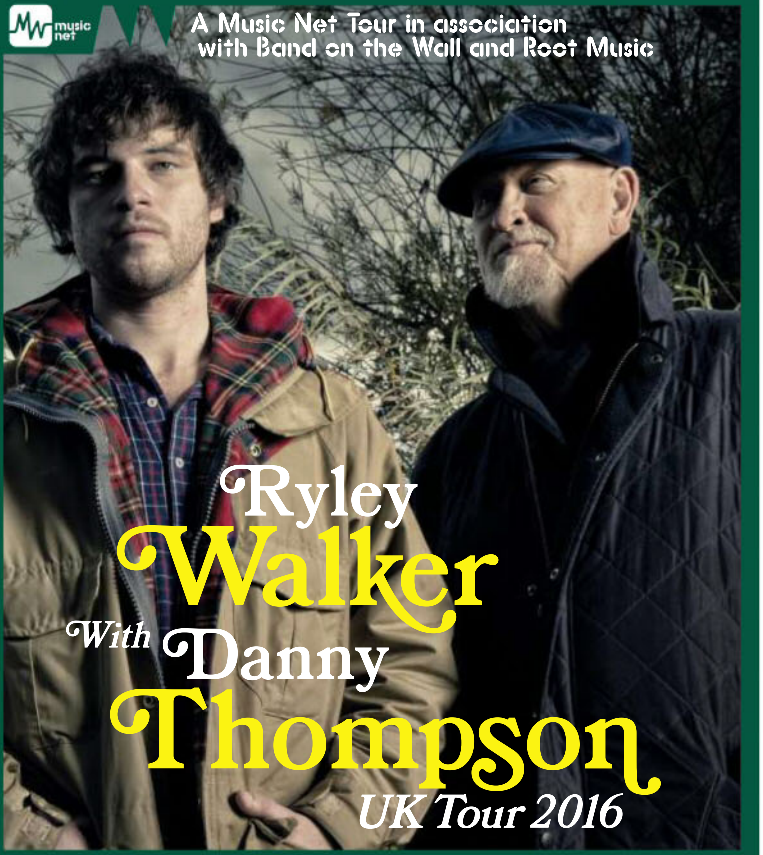

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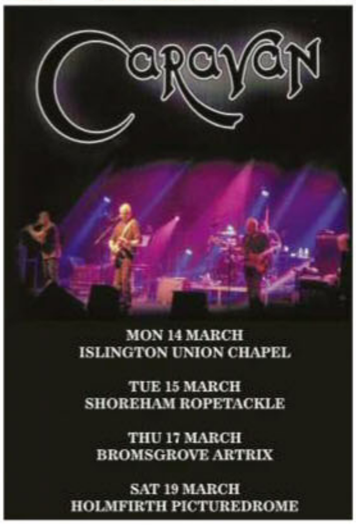

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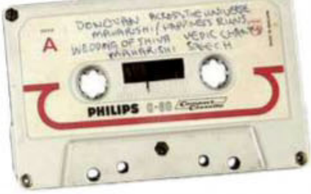
WHO WERE WALLY & THE WANKERS?

Trapped in the corridors of eldritch phantasy? Better tune in to Fred's film, tape and Buddy Holly poseurs!

I'm trying to locate a soundtrack but all I can remember is that it featured Debbie Harry and David Johansen, both recording under pseudonyms.

Gary Preston, via e-mail

Fred says: This one was pretty oddball. Which is why I remember it. The film that spawned the soundtrack was Burnzy's Last Call. A 1995 release, it was set in a bar, and featured David Johansen in a leading role. Vaguely like Cheers, its soundtrack *was* ear-catching. The Smithereens, as Nik Gentry, provided the opening track Into The Mirror, while Graham Parker recorded as Wally And The Wankers, and Evan Dando and Adam Roth donated a song as The Spirochaetes. Deborah Harry sang in the guise of Nancy John, Johansen played as Louie 'Segundo' Due (one of his contributions was titled I Want To Be At My Own Funeral) while Lou Christie sang I Can't Stop The Rain as Frankie Modesto. Crispin Cioe of the Uptown Horns, the film's music director, told MOJO: "The story was set almost entirely in a downtown/Little Italy bar, kind of a like a 'day in the life' of this funky little joint, starting in the morning, when the bartender opens… I suggested that almost the entire score could be songs emanating in the background from an old-but-functioning jukebox stuffed with oldies, especially old Top 40 hits." For reasons of budget and time, Cioe created imaginary songs by fictional one-hit wonders with co-writers and performers he'd worked with – he played reeds with Johansen throughout his Buster Poindexter period, for example, and did the sax solo on Debbie Harry's French Kissin' In The USA in 1986. Copies are easy to come by, luckily.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WHO DID GRANT BASH?

I'm a big John Grant fan and have been struck – no pun intended – by the sight of him wielding a bloody hammer on the album promo film for his *Grey Tickles, Black Pressure* album. Is the 'victim' a specific person? And while I'm here, what's the song Snug Slacks really about?

Gary Lloyd, via e-mail

Fred says: John, a horror movie aficionado, replies, "The victim's not one particular person, it could've been anybody." As for the song: "Snug Slacks is about self-loathing, it's about objectifying other people, it's about sex, it's about the denial of the self and worshipping beauty, and being willing to make a fool of yourself in order to have that beauty. But it's still quite funny!"

WHERE'S DONOVAN'S MAHARISHI MUSIC?

What happened to the tape that Donovan recorded with The Beatles in India in 1968?

K. Lambert, Gosport

Fred says: The C60 cassette, which included a version of Across The Universe amid sounds by John Lennon, Donovan, the Maharishi and others, last surfaced at a Christie's auction in 2003. The unlisted buyer paid over £800 for it, but it's unlikely to get a release: as the sales note said, "The tape is offered without copyright, broadcast rights, performers' consent and other reproduction rights."

ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE
DAVE WALLIS

Wild Rumour: (clockwise from top) Burnzy's Last Call voice Graham Parker (with film poster); Toyah Willcox in The Tempest; Debbie 'Nancy John' Harry; Donovan's C60; unfilmed Stones vehicle novel.

WHY NO STONES FLICK?

Reading about the Jim Jarmusch film Only Lovers Left Alive recently reminded me that The Rolling Stones were said to have worked on a film of that title back in the mid '60s. What happened to the project?

Terry Cash, via e-mail

Fred says: The Stones did intend a film based around Dave Wallis's sci-fi book Only Lovers Left Alive – in an interview with Mick Jagger in a 1966 issue of Rave magazine he claims: "I can't say much about the story now but it's so strange. The sort of thing where everyone dies in the middle. It's going to be great – better than anyone will expect from us. Keith and I are writing the music for it and we're even lending a hand on the script." Incidentally, Jarmusch's film is not based on Wallis's novel.

WHERE CAN I HONOUR HOLLY?

Some years ago I visited Gracelands on a package tour. Is there a similar place that honours Buddy Holly?

G. Clark, via e-mail

Fred says: Best place is the Buddy Holly Centre in Lubbock, Texas. Sited in an old train depot and signposted by a huge pair of Buddy Holly glasses, the BHC exhibition includes Holly's scout uniform, childhood possessions like his collection of marbles and crayons, plus his contact lens case and Fender Stratocaster guitar, plus the glasses worn on the day he died and found in the cornfield in which Holly's plane crashed on that fateful day in 1959. For further info email Pearl@buddyhollycenter.org.

SHAKEY SONGS ENDED

Regarding your query about rock stars playing Shakespeare in MOJO, I can offer Toyah Willcox, who appeared as Miranda in Derek Jarman's film of The Tempest in 1979. The incomparable Elizabeth Welch also made a memorable appearance in said film as a spirit who sings Stormy Weather to the assembled cast, while Marianne Faithfull was Ophelia in Tony Richardson's 1969 movie of Hamlet.

David Taylor, via e-mail

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

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The closing date is **February 2**. For the rules of the quiz, send an SAE to that same address.

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ANSWERS

MOJO 265

Across: 1 James Taylor, 6 Evol, 10 Andromeda Heights, 12 Samba Pa Ti, 16 Alice Cooper, 18 Emma, 20 Interscope, 21 Garage rock, 22 Alto, 23 Leo, 24 Pearl, 26 Stigma, 27 Reed, 29 Oasis, 31 Nik, 32 Nice, 33 Gun, 35 She's A Rainbow, 36 Opener, 38 Echo, 39 Sex, 40 Hole, 42 Tim, 44 Sky, 45 Mods, 49/51 She's A Beauty, 48 Moments, 49 Them, 50 Ooberman, 52 House, 53 Gibb, 54 Lift Me Up, 57 Coast, 59 Aha, 61 Adeva, 62 t.A.T.u, 63 Clear, 64 Opus, 65 Trust, 66 Central, 67 S.E.Rogie.

Across: 1 Joan Baez, 2 Mad, 3 Tame Impala, 4 Yoda, 5 Ophelia, 7 Vehicles And Animals, 8 Last Of Our Kind, 9 Discharge, 11 RCA., 13/23 Annie Lennox, 14 Passengers, 15 Teo, 17 Elkie Brooks, 19 Mel, 21 Goss, 25 Ron Sexsmith, 28 Ween, 30 It's Oh So Quiet, 34 Este, 37 Emo, 41 Labi, 42 Tom, 43 Men, 44 Strike, 45 Moog, 46 Stella, 48 Mr Roboto, 55 Faust, 56 Macca, 58 Taste, 60 True, 62 T.L.C.

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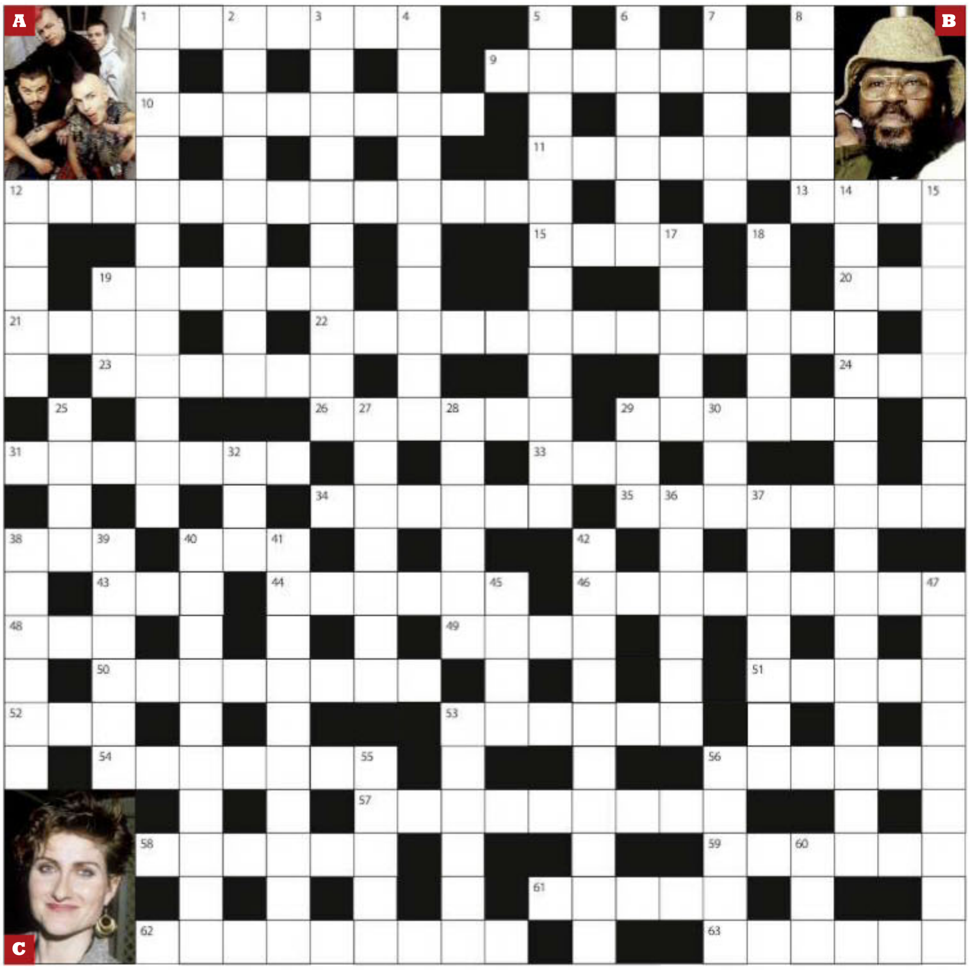
ACROSS

1 He was a Disco Mystic in 1979 (3,4)
9 He was once Blind Boy Grunt (3,5)
10 Disturbed mad woman provides a Mike Oldfield album (8)
11 Keyboardist (7)
12 Cardiff musician who worked with Miles Davis, Shabba Ranks and Mos Def (5,8)
13 George who introduced you to Budapest (4)
16 Reformed Oxford shoegazers (4)
19 *Just Another Band* ---- -- (Frank Zappa and The, or 'Las', Mothers) (4,1.1.)
20 Everybody loves one said Cash (3)
21 Rave band, had a hit with Anthem (4)
22 John Lennon's final studio album (6,7)
23 The interval between one musical pitch and another (6)
24 Steely Dan album that was named after a Korean woman (3)
26 See photoclue A (6)
29 Herbie Hancock's biggest-ever hit (6)
31 Fully electric like a Kasabian single (7)
33 The Stone Roses' Love number (3)
34 New Orleans' night tripper (2,4)
35 A brunette, like Cher once was album-wise (4,4)
38 Colin Murray Archer, as you know him (3)
40 This Mr Nathan founded King Records (3)
43 Easy hit for the Jackson 5 (1.1.1.)
44 McLemore or Mermaid maybe (6)
46 See 17 Down
48 Danielle, once a Lemon Kitten (3)
49 See photoclue B (4)
50 And - --- --- (The Beatles) (1,4,3)
51 Jah Wobble took a passage to it (5)
52 Manfred Eicher's jazz record label (1.1.1)
53 Dolly Parton's sister and one hit wonder (6)
54 Loners switch to provide John Hall's band (7)
56 R.E.M. producer Mitch's time of year (6)
57 They made the *Boss Drum* album (3,6)
58 It's a Van Morrison song, well spotted (6)
59 Fagen or possibly Byrd (6)
61 Bluesman who won a Grammy for his *Keep It Simple* album (3,2)
62 Chicago blues piano great (4,5)
63 A relative like John Misty (6)

DOWN

1 He danced on the ceiling (6,6)
2 Pink Floyd's 1968 double helping (9)
3 See photoclue C (4,6)
4 Ne'er do well sung about by The Monkees and The Coasters. (1.1.8)
5 Clash member who resembled Mickey The Monkey (6,6)
6 The Stones jammed with him in '72 (6)
7 Sonny Rollins supplied the soundtrack to this Michael Caine movie (5)
8 Kool & The Gang album (5)
12 Large like that Funk Railroad (5)
14 Police album that includes Behind My Camel (8,8,)
15 A Pet Shop Boys album – it really is! (8)
17/46 Soundtrack supremo who provided Metallica's introductory theme (5,9)
18 Tori Amos' bright particle (5)
19 Dave Grohl's kind of fighters (3)
25 Their debut album was Olympian (4)
27 Not - --- --- In The House (Meat Loaf) (1,3,3)
28 Erasure album – or part of a song (6)
29 Coloured like David Sylvian's Guitar (3)
30 As washed by Rose Royce (3)
32 Joe from Lubbock, Texas (3)
36 Norwegian singer famed for Running With Wolves (6)
37 "Hari ------" sang Beatle George (7)
38 Dig down advised Janet Jackson (2,4)
39 ------ Park, band fronted by Paul Smith (6)
40 "No more pencils, no more books" (Alice Cooper) (7,3)
41 He co-founded The Kinks (4,6)
42 They took you to Itchycoo Park (5,5)
45 ---- Of Eden (Big Country) (4)
47 Classic 1969 film that featured Harley-Davidson riding hippies and a rock soundtrack (4,5)
53 ---- -- My Old Size Nines (Stereophonics) (4,2)
55 Thump down heavily like The Brothers Johnson (5)
56 --- -- A Century (Blur) (3,2)
60 Cannonball Adderley's trumpet playing brother (3)



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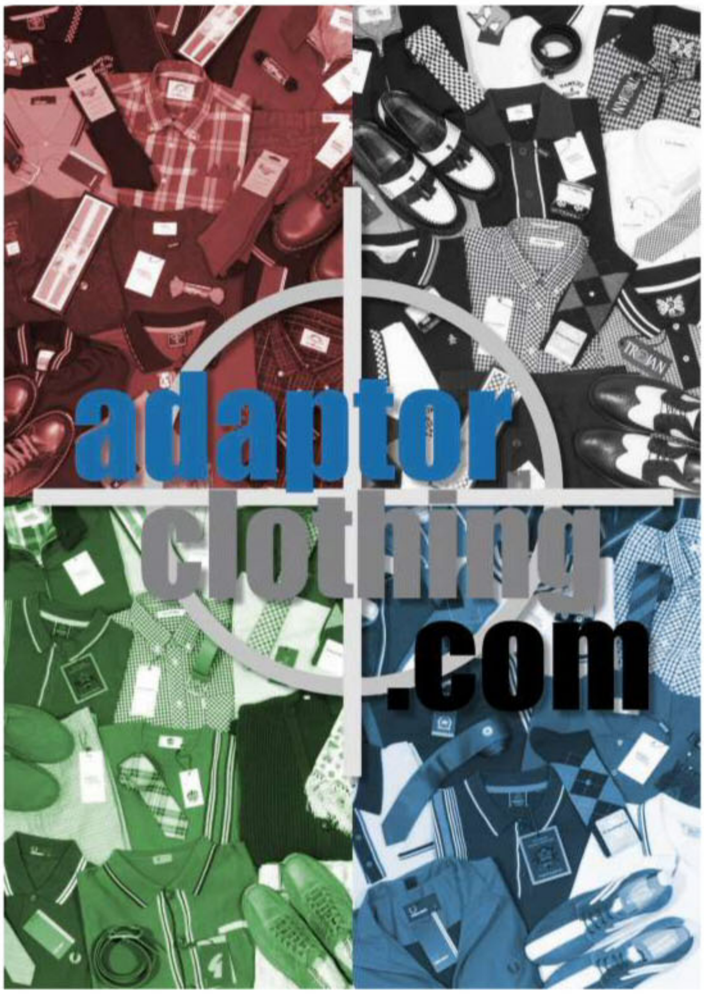
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MICHAEL MONROE AND HANOI ROCKS

It began in Helsinki and Stockholm. But tragedy in Los Angeles led to slow death in Poland.

Barmy Suomi: Hanoi Rocks in 1981 (from left) Andy McCoy, Nasty Suicide, Gyp Casino, Sami Yaffa and Michael Monroe; (bottom, right) in 1985 with René Berg (far left) and Terry Chimes (centre); (below) Monroe today.

HELLO SUMMER 1980

It's kind of complicated, how we formed the band. The first time I met Andy McCoy [guitar] was in 1977 or so, in a rehearsal place in the basement of a beautiful church almost in the centre of Helsinki. Scouts met there, too, they did stuff for kids. I was playing guitar in a party band called Madness – this is before we had any knowledge of the English band, obviously – and we had the same drummer as Andy's band Briard, who were like the first punk band in Finland.

I was fascinated by Andy – he had a cool look, torn jeans and a plastic bag as a shirt, with some crazy, dirty stuff drawn on it in marker. At first he suggested to Briard's singer that I should join as second guitarist, but the singer said, "OK, if you cut your hair." I said, "Keep your band, I ain't gonna cut my hair!" I thought the punk idea was finding your own thing – I remember wearing like, electric blue PVC pants, Teddy Boy creepers and a white doctor's coat from a mental hospital, with a big dick drawn on the back of it.

"I WAS WEARING A WHITE DOCTOR'S COAT FROM A MENTAL HOSPITAL, WITH A BIG DICK DRAWN ON THE BACK OF IT."

But Andy and I kept in touch. He turned me on to Aerosmith, the first Dolls album, The Heartbreakers, and I turned him on to Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. I loved Little Richard and Alice Cooper, and seeing Black Sabbath live in Paris in 1970, on TV – that got me thinking I'd like be a rock singer, when I was eight. We started looking at song ideas and playing… and planning to start the best, coolest band in the world, which eventually became Hanoi Rocks.

In 1980 we moved to Stockholm, and lived out on the streets, me and Nasty Suicide [rhythm guitar] and Sami Yaffa [bass], for the first half-year. Andy had a girlfriend, he stayed with her. It was great though. I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. We got a rehearsal place, and half-a-year later our manager Seppo, a Finnish guy, said, "Yeah, let's start booking some tours." We were off.

GOODBYE JUNE 1985

We'd gone to LA to do some press, and the night we got there was the last time I saw Razzle [Hanoi Rocks drummer from 1982]. The next day he went out to party with that other band [Mötley Crüe] and got killed in that car accident. That was the end for Hanoi Rocks, for me. But the management, everyone, was trying to rush us to keep going – I guess they thought that in another year or two we could have been the biggest band in the world.

It went on for about six months but it felt like an eternity. Three weeks after the accident in January 1985, we did two shows in Helsinki, the last with Sami Yaffa. Terry Chimes was sitting in for Razzle. Four songs were broadcast to millions of people in Europe. It was Hanoi's farewell, in a way. The song A Million Miles Away, the lyrics became about Razzle. I could almost not sing it, because I was pretty much in tears. The band was my life, like my family. I'd grown up with them, and all of a sudden everything was lost.

We did a last tour in Poland, in the spring. I said after this, that's it. It was a miserable tour and a horrible time. The bass player we had [René Berg], I really disliked him the more I got to know him. And at that time Poland was really scary and depressing. I should have never have agreed to do it: when we played in Poland, to me, that was not really Hanoi Rocks.

Afterwards I went to London and moved in with Stiv Bators, who really helped me through that time. At the end of 1985, Little Steven flew me and Stiv over to New York to be on the [Artists United Against Apartheid] video for Sun City, and that's when I decided to move there and make a new start, and my solo career began. I'm still proud of Hanoi Rocks.

Ian Harrison

Michael Monroe's Blackout States is out now on Spinefarm.

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